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Beside the king on a white palfrey, rode the Gothic princess, while at his side walked the astrologer. Page 86. *The Alkambra*

THE ALHAMBRA

TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE MOORS
AND SPANIARDS

By WASHINGTON IRVING

Author of "THE SKETCH BOOK," "KNICKERBOCKER'S
HISTORY OF NEW YORK," "THE CONQUEST OF
GRANADA," "TALES OF A TRAVELLER," etc., etc.



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DEDICATION.

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ., R. A.

MY DEAR SIR: You may remember that, in the course of the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain, particularly Toledo and Seville, we frequently remarked the mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic, remaining from the time of the Moors, and were more than once struck with incidents and scenes in the streets, that brought to mind passages in the "Arabian Nights." You then urged me to write something illustrative of these peculiarities—"something in the Haroun Alraschid style," that should have a dash of that Arabian spice which pervades everything in Spain. I call this to mind to show you that you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work; in which I have given a few "Arabesque" sketches and tales, taken from the life, or founded on local traditions. and mostly struck off during a residence in one of the most legendary and Morisco-Spanish places of the peninsula.

I inscribe this work to you, as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together, in that land of adventure, and as a testimony of an esteem for your worth, which can only be exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow traveler,
THE AUTHOR.

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THE ALHAMBRA.

A SERIES OF TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE MOORS AND SPANIARDS.

THE JOURNEY.

IN the spring of 1829 the author of this work, whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada, in company with a friend, a member of the Russian embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe, and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship, and with them the remembrance of one in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the recollection of his gentleness and worth.

And here, before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish traveling. Many are apt to picture Spain in their imaginations as a soft southern region decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains and long, naked, sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and invariably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness, is the absence of singing birds, a natural conse-

quence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain cliffs and soaring over the peaks, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths, but the myriads of smaller birds, which animate the whole face of other countries, are met with in but few provinces of Spain, and in them chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the exterior provinces the traveler occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt; but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil: at length he perceives some village perched on a steep hill or rugged crag, with moldering battlements and ruined watch-tower; a stronghold, in old times, against civil war or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the marauding of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people, and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal, and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes the eye catches sight, here and there, of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert, or a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus, the country, the

habits, the very looks of the people have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabucho, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparations of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce, also, a mode of traveling, resembling on a diminutive scale the caravans of the East. The arrierors, or carriers, congregate in troops, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days, while individual travelers swell their number and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate wanderer of the land, traversing the peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his alforjas (or saddlebags), of coarse cloth, hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle hanging at his saddle-bow contains wine or water for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains; a mule cloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low but clear-limbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanor is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation—"Dios guarda à usted!" "Vay usted con Dios, caballero!" "God guard you!" "God be with you! cavalier!"

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burden of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched down for desperate defense. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders, and the solitary bandalero, armed to the teeth and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant wayfaring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflections. These he chants forth with a loud voice, and long drawling cadence, seated sideways on his mule, who seems to listen with infinite gravity, and to keep time with his paces, to the tune. The couplets thus chanted are often old traditional romances about the Moors; or some legend of a saint; or some love ditty; or, what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold contrabandista, or hardy bandalero; for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant, and relates to some local scene or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain, and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes they illustrate, accompanied as they are by the occasional jingle of the mule-bell.

It has a most picturesque effect, also, to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height; or, perhaps, the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditionary ballad. At length you see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths; while, as they pass by, the ever ready trabucho, slung behind their packs and saddles, gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast sierras or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sunburnt summits against a deep blue sky, yet in their rugged bosoms lie ingulfed the most verdant and fertile valley, where the desert and the garden strive for mastery, and the very

rock, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

In the wild passes of these mountains the sight of walled towns and villages built like eagles' nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carry the mind back to the chivalrous days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing their lofty Sierras, the traveler is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep and dark and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it struggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by water torrents, the obscure paths of the *contrabandista*; while ever and anon the ominous cross, the memento of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveler that he is among the haunts of banditti; perhaps, at that very moment, under the eye of some lurking *bandalero*. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures in untamed wildness: strangers almost to the face of man. They know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowings of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.

I have been betrayed unconsciously into a longer disquisition than I had intended on the several features of Spanish traveling; but there is a romance about all the recollections of the peninsula that is dear to the imagination.

It was on the first of May that my companion and my-

self set forth from Seville on our route to Granada. We had made all due preparations for the nature of our journey, which lay through mountainous regions where the roads are little better than mere mule paths, and too frequently beset by robbers. The most valuable part of our luggage had been forwarded by the arrieros; we retained merely clothing and necessaries for the journey, and money for the expenses of the road, with a sufficient surplus of the latter to satisfy the expectations of robbers, should we be assailed, and to save ourselves from the rough treatment that awaits the too wary and empty-handed traveler. A couple of stout hired steeds were provided for ourselves, and a third for our scanty luggage and for the conveyance of a sturdy Biscayan lad of about twenty years of age, who was to guide us through the perplexed mazes of the mountain roads, to take care of our horses, to act occasionally as our valet, and at all times as our guard; for he had a formidable trabucho, or carbine, to defend us from rateros, or solitary footpads, about which weapon he made much vainglorious boast, though, to the discredit of his generalship, I must say that it generally hung unloaded behind his saddle. He was, however, a faithful, cheery, kind-hearted creature, full of saws and proverbs as that miracle of squires, the renowned Sancho himself, whose name we bestowed upon him; and, like a true Spaniard, though treated by us with companionable familiarity, he never for a moment in his utmost hilarity overstepped the bounds of respectful decorum.

Thus equipped and attended, we set out on our journey with a genuine disposition to be pleased: with such a disposition, what a country is Spain for a traveler, where the most miserable inn is as full of adventure as an enchanted castle, and every meal is in itself an achievement! Let others repine at the lack of turnpike roads and sumptuous hotels, and all the elaborate comforts of a country cultivated into tameness and commonplace, but give me the rude mountain scramble, the roving, haphazard wayfaring, the frank, hopsitable, though half-wild manners, that give such a true game flavor to romantic Spain!

Our first evening's entertainment had a relish of the kind. We arrived after sunset at a little town among

the hills, after a fatiguing journey over a wide, houseless plain, where we had been repeatedly drenched with showers. In the inn were quartered a party of Miguelistas, who were patrolling the country in pursuit of robbers. The appearance of foreigners like ourselves was unusual in this remote town. Mine host with two or three old gossiping comrades in brown cloaks studied our passports in the corner of the posada, while an Alguazil took notes by the dim light of a lamp. The passports were in foreign languages and perplexed them, but our Squire Sancho assisted them in their studies, and magnified our importance with the grandiloquence of a Spaniard. In the meantime the magnificent distribution of a few cigars had won the hearts of all around us. In a little while the whole community seemed put in agitation to make us welcome. The Corregidor himself waited upon us, and a great rush-bottomed armed chair was ostentatiously bolstered into our room by our landlady, for the accommodation of that important personage. The commander of the patrol took supper with us: a surly, talking, laughing, swaggering Andaluz, who had made a campaign in South America, and recounted his exploits in love and war with much pomp of praise and vehemence of gesticulation, and mysterious rolling of the eye. He told us he had a list of all the robbers in the country, and meant to ferret out every mother's son of them; he offered us at the same time some of his soldiers as an escort. "One is enough to protect you, signors; the robbers know me, and know my men; the sight of one is enough to spread terror through a whole sierra." We thanked him for his offer, but assured him, in his own strain, that with the protection of our redoubtable Squire Sancho we were not afraid of all the ladrones of Andalusia.

While we were supping with our Andalusian friend we heard the notes of a guitar and the click of castanets, and presently a chorus of voices singing a popular air. In fact, mine host had gathered together the amateur singers and musicians and the rustic belles of the neighborhood, and on going forth the courtyard of the inn presented a scene of true Spanish festivity. We took our seats with mine host and hostess and the commander of the patrol, under the archway of the court. The guitar

passed from hand to hand, but a jovial shoemaker was the Orpheus of the place. He was a pleasant-looking fellow with huge black whiskers and a roguish eye. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows; he touched the guitar with masterly skill, and sang little amorous ditties with an expressive leer at the women, with whom he was evidently a favorite. He afterward danced a fandango with a buxom Andalusian damsel, to the great delight of the spectators. But none of the females present could compare with mine host's pretty daughter Josefa, who had slipped away and made her toilette for the occasion, and had adorned her head with roses; and also distinguished herself in a bolero with a handsome young dragoon. We had ordered our host to let wine and refreshments circulate freely among the company, yet, though there was a motley assemblage of soldiers, muleteers and villagers, no one exceeded the bounds of sober enjoyment. The scene was a study for a painter: the picturesque group of dancers; the troopers in their half-military dresses, the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks, nor must I omit to mention the old meager Alguazil in a short black cloak, who took no notice of anything going on, but sat in a corner diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp that might have figured in the days of Don Quixote.

I am not writing a regular narrative, and do not pretend to give the varied events of several days' rambling over hill and dale, and moor and mountain. We traveled in true contrabandista style, taking everything, rough and smooth, as we found it, and mingling with all classes and conditions in a kind of vagabond companionship. It is the true way to travel in Spain. Knowing the scanty larders of the inns, and the naked tracts of country the traveler has often to traverse, we had taken care, on starting, to have the alforjas, or saddle-bags, of our squire well stocked with cold provisions, and his beta, or leathern bottle, which was of portly dimensions, filled to the neck with choice Valdepenas wine. As this was a munition for our campaign more important than even his trabucho, we exhorted him to have an eye to it, and I will do him the justice to say that his namesake, the trencher-loving Sancho himself, could not excel him as a provident purveyor. Though the alforjas and beta were

repeatedly and vigorously assailed throughout the journey, they appeared to have a miraculous property of being never empty; for our vigilant squire took care to sack everything that remained from our evening repasts at the inns, to supply our next day's luncheon.

What luxurious noontide repasts have we made on the greensward by the side of a brook or fountain under a shady tree, and then what delicious siestas on our cloaks spread out on the herbage!

We paused one day at noon for a repast of the kind. It was in a pleasant little green meadow, surrounded by hills covered with olive-trees. Our cloaks were spread on the grass under an elm-tree, by the side of a babbling rivulet; our horses were tethered where they might crop the herbage, and Sancho produced his alforjas with an air of triumph. They contained the contributions of four days' journeying, but had been signally enriched by the foraging of the previous evening, in a plenteous inn at Antequera. Our squire drew forth the heterogeneous contents one by one, and they seemed to have no end. First came forth a shoulder of roasted kid, very little the worse for wear, then an entire partridge, then a great morsel of salted codfish wrapped in paper, then the residue of a ham, then the half of a pullet, together with several rolls of bread and a rabble rout of oranges, figs, raisins, and walnuts. His beta also had been recruited with some excellent wine of Malaga. At every fresh apparition from his larder he could enjoy our ludicrous surprise, throwing himself back on the grass and shouting with laughter.

Nothing pleased this simple-hearted varlet more than to be compared, for his devotion to the trencher, to the renowned squire of Don Quixote. He was well versed in the history of the Don, and, like most of the common people of Spain, he firmly believed it to be a true history.

"All that, however, happened a long time ago, signor," said he to me, one day, with an inquiring look.

"A very long time," was the reply.

"I dare say, more than a thousand years?" still looking dubiously.

"I dare say? not less."

The squire was satisfied.

As we were making our repast above described, and

diverting ourselves with the simple drollery of our squire, a solitary beggar approached us, who had almost the look of a pilgrim. He was evidently very old, with a gray beard, and supported himself on a staff, yet age had not borne him down; he was tall and erect, and had the wreck of a fine form. He wore a round Andalusian hat, a sheepskin jacket, and leathern breeches, gaiters, and sandals. His dress, though old and patched, was decent, his demeanor manly, and he addressed us with that grave courtesy that is to be remarked in the lowest Spaniard. We were in a favorable mood for such a visitor, and in a freak of capricious charity gave him some silver, a loaf of fine wheaten bread, and a goblet of our choice wine of Malaga. He received them thankfully, but without any groveling tribute of gratitude. Tasting the wine, he held it up to the light with a slight beam of surprise in his eye; then quaffing it off at a draught: "It is many years," said he, "since I have tasted such wine. It is a cordial to an old man's heart." Then looking at the beautiful wheaten loaf: "Bendita sea tal pan!" (blessed be such bread!) So saying, he put it in his wallet. We urged him to eat it on the spot. "No, signors," replied he, "the wine I had to drink, or leave; but the bread I must take home to share with my family."

Our man Sancho sought our eye, and reading permission there, gave the old man some of the ample fragments of our repast; on condition, however, that he should sit down and make a meal. He accordingly took his seat at some little distance from us, and began to eat, slowly, and with a sobriety and decorum that would have become a hidalgo. There was altogether a measured manner and a quiet self-possession about the old man that made me think he had seen better days; his language, too, though simple, had occasionally something picturesque and almost poetical in the phraseology. I set him down for some broken-down cavalier. I was mistaken—it was nothing but the innate courtesy of a Spaniard, and the poetical turn of thought and language often to be found in the lowest classes of this clear-witted people. For fifty years, he told us, he had been a shepherd, but now he was out of employ, and destitute. "When I was a young man," said he, "nothing could harm or trouble me. I was always well, always gay; but

now I am seventy-nine years of age, and a beggar, and my heart begins to fail me."

Still he was not a regular mendicant, it was not until recently that want had driven him to this degradation, and he gave a touching picture of the struggle between hunger and pride, when abject destitution first came upon him. He was returning from Malaga without money; he had not tasted food for some time, and was crossing one of the great plains of Spain, where there were but few habitations. When almost dead with hunger, he applied at the door of a *venta*, or country inn. "*Perdona usted per Dios hermano!*" (excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) was the reply—the usual mode in Spain of refusing a beggar. "I turned away," said he, "with shame greater than my hunger, for my heart was yet too proud. I came to a river with high banks and deep rapid current, and felt tempted to throw myself in; what should such an old worthless wretched man as I live for! But when I was on the brink of the current I thought on the blessed Virgin, and turned away. I traveled on until I saw a country-seat at a little distance from the road, and entered the outer gate of the courtyard. The door was shut, but there were two young signoras at a window. I approached, and begged: '*Perdona usted per Dios hermano!*' (excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) and the window closed. I crept out of the courtyard; but hunger overcame me, and my heart gave way. I thought my hour was at hand. So I laid myself down at the gate, commended myself to the holy Virgin, and covered my head to die. In a little while afterward, the master of the house came home. Seeing me lying at his gate, he uncovered my head, had pity on my gray hairs, took me into his house, and gave me food. So, signors, you see that we should always put confidence in the protection of the Virgin."

The old man was on his way to his native place, Archidona, which was close by the summit of a steep and rugged mountain. He pointed to the ruins of its old Moorish castle. That castle, he said, was inhabited by a Moorish king at the time of the wars of Granada. Queen Isabella invaded it with a great army, but the king looked down from his castle among the clouds, and laughed her to scorn. Upon this the Virgin appeared to

the queen, and guided her and her army up a mysterious path of the mountain, which had never before been known. When the Moor saw her coming, he was astonished, and springing with his horse from a precipice, was dashed to pieces. The marks of his horse's hoofs, said the old man, are to be seen on the margin of the rock to this day. And see, signors, yonder is the road by which the queen and her army mounted, you see it like a ribbon up the mountain side; but the miracle is that, though it can be seen at a distance, when you come near it disappears. The ideal road to which he pointed was evidently a sandy ravine of the mountain, which looked narrow and defined at a distance, but became broad and indistinct on an approach. As the old man's heart warmed with wine and wassail, he went on to tell us a story of the buried treasure left under the earth by the Moorish king. His own house was next to the foundations of the castle. The curate and notary dreamed three times of the treasure, and went to work at the place pointed out in their dreams. His own son-in-law heard the sound of their pick-axes and spades at night. What they found nobody knows; they became suddenly rich, but kept their own secret. Thus the old man had once been next door to fortune, but was doomed never to get under the same roof.

I have remarked that the stories of treasure buried by the Moors which prevail throughout Spain are most current among the poorest people. It is thus kind nature consoles with shadows for the lack of substantials. The thirsty man dreams of fountains and roaring streams, the hungry man of ideal banquets, and the poor man of heaps of hidden gold; nothing certainly is more magnificent than the imagination of a beggar.

The last traveling sketch which I shall give is a curious scene at the little city of Loxa. This was a famous belligerent frontier post in the time of the Moors, and repulsed Ferdinand from its walls. It was the stronghold of old Ali Atar, the father-in-law of Boabdil, when that fiery veteran sallied forth with his son-in-law on that disastrous inroad that ended in the death of the chieftain and the capture of the monarch. Loxa is wildly situated in a broken mountain pass, on the banks of the Xenil, among rocks and groves, and meadows and

gardens. The people seem still to retain the bold, fiery spirit of the olden time. Our inn was suited to the place. It was kept by a young, handsome Andalusian widow, whose trim busquina of black silk fringed with bugles set off the play of a graceful form, and round pliant limbs. Her step was firm and elastic, her dark eye was full of fire, and the coquetry of her air and varied ornaments of her person showed that she was accustomed to be admired.

She was well matched by a brother, nearly about her own age; they were perfect models of the Andalusian *majo* and *maja*. He was tall, vigorous, and well formed, with a clear olive complexion, a dark beaming eye, and curling chestnut whiskers that met under his chin. He was gallantly dressed in a short green velvet jacket, fitted to his shape, profusely decorated with silver buttons, with a white handkerchief in each pocket. He had breeches of the same, with rows of buttons from the hips to the knees; a pink silk handkerchief round his neck, gathered through a ring, on the bosom of a neatly plaited shirt; a sash round the waist to match; *bottinas* or spatterdashes of the finest russet leather, elegantly worked and open at the calves to show his stockings, and russet shoes setting off a well-shaped foot.

As he was standing at the door a horseman rode up and entered into low and earnest conversation with him. He was dressed in similar style, and almost with equal finery. A man about thirty, square built, with strong Roman features, handsome, though slightly pitted with the small-pox, with a free, bold and somewhat daring air. His powerful black horse was decorated with tassels and fanciful trappings, and a couple of broad-mouthed blunderbusses hung behind the saddle. He had the air of those *contrabandistas* that I have seen in the mountains of Ronda, and evidently had a good understanding with the brother of mine hostess; nay, if I mistake not, he was a favorite admirer of the widow. In fact, the whole inn and its inmates had something of a *contrabandista* aspect, and the blunderbuss stood in a corner beside the guitar. The horseman I have mentioned passed his evening in the *posada*, and sang several bold mountain romances with great spirit.

As we were at supper, two poor Asturians put in in

distress, begging food and a night's lodging. They had been waylaid by robbers as they came from a fair among the mountains, robbed of a horse, which carried all their stock in trade, stripped of their money and most of their apparel, beaten for having offered resistance, and left almost naked in the road. My companion, with a prompt generosity natural to him, ordered them a supper and a bed, and gave them a supply of money to help them forward toward their home.

As the evening advanced the *dramatis personæ* thickened. A large man, about sixty years of age, of powerful frame, came strolling in, to gossip with mine hostess. He was dressed in the ordinary Andalusian costume, but had a huge saber tucked under his arm, wore large mustaches and had something of a lofty, swaggering air. Every one seemed to regard him with great deference.

Our man, Sancho, whispered to us that he was Don Ventura Rodriguez, the hero and champion of Loxa, famous for his prowess and the strength of his arm. In the time of the French invasion he surprised six troopers who were asleep. He first secured their horses, then attacked them with his saber; killed some, and took the rest prisoners. For this exploit the king allows him a peceta (the fifth of a duro, or dollar) per day, and has dignified him with the title of Don.

I was amused to notice his swelling language and demeanor. He was evidently a thorough Andalusian, boastful as he was brave. His saber was always in his hand, or under his arm. He carries it always about with him as a child does a doll, calls it his Santa Teresa, and says that when he draws it "tembla la tierra!" (the earth trembles!)

I sat until a late hour listening to the varied themes of this motley group, who mingled together with the unreserve of a Spanish posada. We had contrabandista songs, stories of robbers, guerrilla exploits, and Moorish legends. The last one from our handsome landlady, who gave a poetical account of the infiernos, or infernal regions of Loxa—dark caverns, in which subterranean streams and waterfalls make a mysterious sound. The common people say they are money coiners, shut up there from the time of the Moors, and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in these caverns.

Were it the purport of this work, I could fill its pages with the incidents and scenes of our rambling expedition, but other themes invite me. Journeying in this manner, we at length emerged from the mountains and entered upon the beautiful Vega of Granada. Here we took our last midday's repast under a grove of olive-trees, on the borders of a rivulet, with the old Moorish capital in the distance, dominated by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while far above it the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver. The day was without a cloud, and the heat of the sun tempered by cool breezes from the mountains; after our repast we spread our cloaks and took our last siesta, lulled by the humming of bees among the flowers, and the notes of the ring doves from the neighboring olive-trees. When the sultry hours were past we resumed our journey, and after passing between hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and through a wilderness of gardens, arrived about sunset at the gates of Granada.

GOVERNMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

To the traveler imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical, the Alhambra of Granada is as much an object of veneration as is the Caaba, or sacred house of Mecca, to all true Moslem pilgrims. How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous, how many songs and romances, Spanish and Arabian, of love and war and chivalry, are associated with this romantic pile! The reader may judge, therefore, of our delight, when, shortly after our arrival in Granada, the governor of Alhambra gave us permission to occupy his vacant apartments in the Moorish palace. My companion was soon summoned away by the duties of his station, but I remained for several months spellbound in the old enchanted pile. The following papers are the result of my reveries and researches during that delicious thralldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra.

THE Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise, and made their last stand for empire in Spain. The palace occupies but a portion of the fortress, the walls of which, studded with towers, stretch irregularly round the whole crest of a lofty hill that overlooks the city and forms a spire of the Sierra Nevada, or Snowy Mountain.

In the time of the Moors the fortress was capable of containing an army of forty thousand men within its precincts, and served occasionally as a stronghold of the sovereigns against their rebellious subjects. After the kingdom had passed into the hands of the Christians the Alhambra continued a royal demesne, and was occasionally inhabited by the Castilian monarchs. The Emperor Charles V. began a sumptuous palace within its walls, but was deterred from completing it by repeated shocks of earthquakes. The last royal residents were Philip V. and his beautiful Queen Elizabetta, of Parma, early in the eighteenth century.

Great preparations were made for their reception. The palace and gardens were placed in a state of repair and a new suit of apartments erected, and decorated by artists brought from Italy. The sojourn of the sovereigns was transient; and after their departure, the palace once more became desolate. Still the place was maintained with some military state. The governor held it immediately from the crown: its jurisdiction extended down into the suburbs of the city and was independent of the captain-general of Granada. A considerable garrison was kept up; the governor had his apartments in the old Moorish palace, and never descended into Granada without some military parade. The fortress, in fact, was a little town of itself, having several streets of houses within its walls, together with a Franciscan convent and a parochial church.

The desertion of the court, however, was a fatal blow to the Alhambra. Its beautiful walls became desolate and some of them fell to ruin; the gardens were destroyed, and the fountains ceased to play. By degrees the dwellings became filled up with a loose and lawless population—contrabandistas, who availed themselves of its independent jurisdiction, to carry on a wide and daring course

of smuggling, and thieves and rogues of all sorts, who made this their place of refuge, from whence they might depredate upon Granada and its vicinity. The strong arm of government at length interposed. The whole community was thoroughly sifted; none were suffered to remain but such as were of honest character and had legitimate right to a residence; the greater part of the houses were demolished, and a mere hamlet left, with the parochial church and the Franciscan convent.

During the recent troubles in Spain, when Granada was in the hands of the French, the Alhambra was garrisoned by their troops, and the palace was occasionally inhabited by the French commander. With that enlightened taste which has ever distinguished the French nation in their conquests, this monument of Moorish elegance and grandeur was rescued from the absolute ruin and desolation that were overwhelming it. The roofs were repaired, the saloons and galleries protected from the weather, the gardens cultivated, the water-courses restored, the fountains once more made to throw up their sparkling showers: and Spain may thank her invaders for having preserved to her the most beautiful and interesting of her historical monuments.

On the departure of the French, they blew up several towers of the outer wall, and left the fortifications scarcely tenable. Since that time the military importance of the post is at an end. The garrison is a handful of invalid soldiers, whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers, which serve occasionally as a prison of state; and the governor, abandoning the lofty hill of the Alhambra, resides in the center of Granada, for the more convenient dispatch of his official duties. I cannot conclude this brief notice of the state of the fortress without bearing testimony to the honorable exertions of its present commander, Don Francisco de Salis Serna, who is tasking all the limited resources at his command to put the palace in a state of repair; and by his judicious precautions has for some time arrested its too certain decay. Had his predecessors discharged the duties of their station with equal fidelity the Alhambra might yet have remained in almost its pristine beauty; were government to second him with means equal to his zeal this edifice might still be preserved to adorn the land

and to attract the curious and enlightened of every clime, for many generations.

INTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA.

THE Alhambra has been so often and so minutely described by travelers that a mere sketch will probably be sufficient for the reader to refresh his recollection; I will give, therefore, a brief account of our visit to it the morning after our arrival in Granada.

Leaving our posada of La Espada, we traversed the renowned square of the Vivarrambla, once the scene of Moorish jousts and tournaments, now a crowded market place. From thence we proceeded along the Zacatin, the main street of what was the great Bazaar, in the time of the Moors, where the small shops and narrow alleys still retain their Oriental character. Crossing an open place in front of the palace of the captain-general, we ascended a confined and winding street, the name of which reminded us of the chivalric days of Granada. It is called the *Calle*, or street of the Gomeres: from a Moorish family, famous in chronicle and song. This street led up to a mansion gateway of Grecian architecture, built by Charles V., forming the entrance to the domains of the Alhambra.

At the gate were two or three ragged and superannuated soldiers, dozing on a stone bench, the successors of the Zegrís and the Abencerrages; while a tall, meager varlet, whose rusty brown cloak was evidently intended to conceal the ragged state of his nether garments, was lounging in the sunshine and gossiping with an ancient sentinel, on duty. He joined us as we entered the gate, and offered his services to show us the fortress.

I have a traveler's dislike to officious ciceroni, and did not altogether like the garb of the applicant:

"You are well acquainted with the place, I presume?"

"Niñuno mas—pues, señor, soy hijo de la Alhambra."

(Nobody better—in fact, sir, I am a son of the Alhambra.)

The common Spaniards have certainly a most poetical way of expressing themselves—"A son of the Alhambra;"

the appellation caught me at once; the very tattered garb of my new acquaintance assumed a dignity in my eyes. It was emblematic of the features of the place, and became the progeny of a ruin.

I put some further questions to him, and found his title was legitimate. His family had lived in the fortress from generation to generation ever since the time of the conquest. His name was Mateo Ximenes. "Then, perhaps," said I, "you may be a descendant from the great Cardinal Ximenes."

"Dios sabe! God knows, señor. It may be so. We are the oldest family in the Alhambra. *Viejos Cristianos*, old Christians, without any taint of Moor or Jew. I know we belong to some great family or other, but I forget who. My father knows all about it. He has the coat of arms hanging up in his cottage, up in the fortress." There is never a Spaniard, however poor, but has some claim to high pedigree. The first title of this ragged worthy, however, had completely captivated me, so I gladly accepted the services of the "son of the Alhambra."

We now found ourselves in a deep, narrow ravine, filled with beautiful groves, with a steep avenue and various footpaths winding through it, bordered with stone seats and ornamented with fountains. To our left, we beheld the towers of the Alhambra beetling above us; to our right, on the opposite side of the ravine, we were equally dominated by rival towers on a rocky eminence. These, we were told, were the *Torres Vermejos*, or Vermilion towers, so called from their ruddy hue. No one knows their origin. They are of a date much anterior to the Alhambra. Some suppose them to have been built by the Romans; others, by some wandering colony of Phœnicians. Ascending the steep and shady avenue, we arrived at the foot of a huge square Moorish tower, forming a kind of barbican, through which passed the main entrance to the fortress. Within the barbican was another group of veteran invalids, one mounting guard at the portal, while the rest, wrapped in their tattered cloaks, slept on the stone benches. This portal is called the Gate of Justice, from the tribunal held within its porch during the Moslem domination, for the immediate trial of petty causes; a custom common to the Oriental

nations, and occasionally alluded to in the sacred Scriptures.

The great vestibule, or porch of the gate, is formed by an immense Arabian arch of the horseshoe form, which springs to half the height of the tower. On the keystone of this arch is engraven a gigantic hand. Within the vestibule, on the keystone of the portal, is engraven, in like manner, a gigantic key. Those who pretend to some knowledge of Mohammedan symbols affirm that the hand is the emblem of doctrine, and the key of faith; the latter, they add, was emblazoned on the standard of the Moslems when they subdued Andalusia, in opposition to the Christian emblem of the cross. A different explanation, however, was given by the legitimate "son of the Alhambra," and one more in unison with the notions of the common people, who attach something of mystery and magic to everything Moorish, and have all kinds of superstitions connected with this old Moslem fortress.

According to Mateo, it was a tradition handed down from the oldest inhabitants, and which he had from his father and grandfather, that the hand and key were magical devices on which the fate of the Alhambra depended. The Moorish king who built it was a great magician, and, as some believed, had sold himself to the devil, and had laid the whole fortress under a magic spell. By this means it had remained standing for several hundred years, in defiance of storms and earthquakes, while almost all the other buildings of the Moors had fallen to ruin and disappeared. The spell, the tradition went on to say, would last until the hand on the outer arch should reach down and grasp the key, when the whole pile would tumble to pieces, and all the treasures buried beneath it by the Moors would be revealed.

Notwithstanding this ominous prediction, we ventured to pass through the spellbound gateway, feeling some little assurance against magic art in the protection of the Virgin, a statue of whom we observed above the portal.

After passing through the barbican we ascended a narrow lane, winding between walls, and came on an open esplanade within the fortress, called the Plaza de los Algibes, or Place of the Cisterns, from great reservoirs which undermine it, cut in the living rock by the

Moors, for the supply of the fortress. Here, also, is a well of immense depth, furnishing the purest and coldest of water, another monument of the delicate taste of the Moors, who were indefatigable in their exertions to obtain that element in its crystal purity.

In front of this esplanade is the splendid pile commenced by Charles V., intended, it is said, to eclipse the residence of the Moslem kings. With all its grandeur and architectural merit, it appeared to us like an arrogant intrusion, and passing by it we entered a simple, unostentatious portal, opening into the interior of the Moorish palace.

The transition was almost magical; it seemed as if we were at once transported into other times and another realm, and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court paved with white marble and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles. It is called the court of the Alberca. In the center was an immense basin, or fish-pool, a hundred and thirty feet in length by thirty in breadth, stocked with gold-fish, and bordered by hedges of roses. At the upper end of this court rose the great tower of Comares.

From the lower end, we passed through a Moorish archway into the renowned Court of Lions. There is no part of the edifice that gives us a more complete idea of its original beauty and magnificence than this; for none has suffered so little from the ravages of time. In the center stands the fountain famous in song and story. The alabaster basins still shed their diamond drops, and the twelve lions which support them cast forth their crystal streams as in the days of Boabdil. The court is laid out in flower-beds, and surrounded by light Arabian arcades of open filigree work, supported by slender pillars of white marble. The architecture, like that of all the other parts of the palace, is characterized by elegance rather than grandeur, bespeaking a delicate and graceful taste, and a disposition to indolent enjoyment. When we look upon the fairy tracery of the peristyles and the apparently fragile fretwork of the walls, it is difficult to believe that so much has survived the wear and tear of centuries, the shocks of earthquakes, the violence of war, and the quiet, though no less baneful, pilferings of the tasteful traveler. It is almost sufficient

to excuse the popular tradition that the whole is protected by a magic charm.

On one side of the court a portal richly adorned opens into a lofty hall paved with white marble, and called the Hall of the two Sisters. A cupola or lantern admits a tempered light from above, and a free circulation of air. The lower part of the walls is incrustated with beautiful Moorish tiles, on some of which are emblazoned the escutcheons of the Moorish monarchs: the upper part is faced with the fine stucco work invented at Damascus, consisting of large plates cast in molds and artfully joined, so as to have the appearance of having been laboriously sculptured by the hand into light relievos and fanciful arabesques, intermingled with texts of the Koran, and poetical inscriptions in Arabian and Celtic characters. These decorations of the walls and cupolas are richly gilded, and the interstices paneled with lapis lazuli and other brilliant and enduring colors. On each side of the wall are recesses for ottomans and arches. Above an inner porch is a balcony which communicated with the women's apartment. The latticed balconies still remain, from whence the dark-eyed beauties of the harem might gaze unseen upon the entertainments of the hall below.

It is impossible to contemplate this once favorite abode of Oriental manners without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony, or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday—but where are the Zoraydas and Linderaxas!

On the opposite side of the Court of Lions is the hall of the Abencerrages, so called from the gallant cavaliers of that illustrious line, who were here perfidiously massacred. There are some who doubt the whole truth of this story, but our humble attendant, Mateo, pointed out the very wicket of the portal through which they are said to have been introduced, one by one, and the white marble fountain in the center of the hall, where they were beheaded. He showed us also certain broad, ruddy stains in the pavement, traces of their blood, which, according to popular belief, can never be effaced. Find-

ing we listened to him with easy faith, he added that there was often heard at night, in the Court of the Lions, a low, confused sound, resembling the murmurings of a multitude; with now and then a faint tinkling, like the distant clank of chains. These noises are probably produced by the bubbling currents and tinkling falls of water, conducted under the pavement through the pipes and channels to supply the fountains; but according to the legend of the son of the Alhambra, they are made by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages, who nightly haunt the scene of their suffering, and invoke the vengeance of Heaven on their destroyer.

From the Court of Lions we retraced our steps through the court of the Alberca, or great fish-pool, crossing which, we proceeded to the tower of Comares, so called from the name of the Arabian architect. It is of massive strength and lofty height, domineering over the rest of the edifice and overhanging the steep hillside, which descends abruptly to the banks of the Darro. A Moorish archway admitted us into a vast and lofty hall, which occupies the interior of the tower and was the grand audience chamber of the Moslem monarchs, thence called the hall of Ambassadors. It still bears the traces of past magnificence. The walls are richly stuccoed and decorated with arabesques, the vaulted ceilings of cedar wood, almost lost in obscurity from its height, still gleam with rich gilding and the brilliant tints of the Arabian pencil. On three sides of the saloon are deep windows, cut through the immense thickness of the walls, the balconies of which look down upon the verdant valley of the Darro, the streets and convents of the Albaycin, and command a prospect of the distant Vega. I might go on to describe the other delightful apartments of this side of the palace; the Tocador or toilet of the Queen, an open belvedere on the summit of the tower, where the Moorish sultanas enjoyed the pure breezes from the mountain and the prospect of the surrounding paradise. The secluded little patio or garden of Lindaraxa, with its alabaster fountain, its thickets of roses and myrtles, of citrons and oranges. The cool halls and grottoes of the baths, where the glare and heat of day are tempered into a self-mysterious light and a pervading freshness. But I appear to dwell minutely on these scenes. My object

is merely to give the reader a general introduction in an abode, where, if disposed, he may linger and loiter with me through the remainder of this work, gradually becoming familiar with all its beauties.

An abundant supply of water, brought from the mountains by old Moorish aqueducts, circulates throughout the palace, supplying its baths and fish-pools, sparkling in jets within its halls, or murmuring in channels along the marble pavements. When it has paid its tribute to the royal pile, and visited its gardens and pastures, it flows down the long avenue leading to the city, tinkling in rills, gushing in fountains, and maintaining a perpetual verdure in those groves that embower and beautify the whole hill of the Alhambra.

Those, only, who have sojourned in the ardent climates of the South can appreciate the delights of an abode combining the breezy coolness of the mountain with the freshness and verdure of the valley.

While the city below pants with the noon-tide heat, and the parched Vega trembles to the eye, the delicate airs from the Sierra Nevada play through the lofty halls, bringing with them the sweetness of the surrounding gardens. Everything invites to that indolent repose, the bliss of Southern climes; and while the half-shut eye looks out from shaded balconies upon the glittering landscape, the ear is lulled by the rustling of groves and the murmur of running streams.

THE TOWER OF COMARES.

THE reader has had a sketch of the interior of the Alhambra, and may be desirous of a general idea of its vicinity. The morning is serene and lovely; the sun has not gained sufficient power to destroy the freshness of the night; we will mount to the summit of the tower of Comares, and take a bird's-eye view of Granada and its environs.

Come, then, worthy reader and comrade, follow my steps into this vestibule ornamented with rich tracery, which opens to the hall of Ambassadors. We will not enter the hall, however, but turn to the left, to this

small door, opening in the wall. Have a care! here are steep winding steps and but scanty light. Yet, up this narrow, obscure and winding staircase the proud monarchs of Granada and their queens have often ascended to the battlements of the tower to watch the approach of Christian armies or to gaze on the battles in the Vega. At length we are upon the terraced roof, and may take breath for a moment, while we cast a general eye over the splendid panorama of city and country, of rocky mountain, verdant valley and fertile plain; of castle, cathedral, Moorish towers and Gothic domes, crumbling ruins and blooming groves.

Let us approach the battlements and cast our eyes immediately below. See—on this side we have the whole plan of the Alhambra laid open to us, and can look down into its courts and gardens. At the foot of the tower is the Court of the Alberca with its great tank or fish-pool bordered with flowers; and yonder is the Court of Lions, with its famous fountain, and its light Moorish arcades; and in the center of the pile is the little garden of Lindaraxa, buried in the heart of the building, with its roses and citrons and shrubbery of emerald green.

That belt of battlements studded with square towers, straggling round the whole brow of the hill, is the outer boundary of the fortress. Some of the towers, you may perceive, are in ruins, and their massive fragments are buried among vines, fig-trees and aloes.

Let us look on this northern side of the tower. It is a giddy height; the very foundations of the tower rise above the groves of the steep hillside. And see, a long fissure in the massive walls shows that the tower has been rent by some of the earthquakes which from time to time have thrown Granada into consternation; and which, sooner or later, must reduce this crumbling pile to a mere mass of ruin. The deep, narrow glen below us, which gradually widens as it opens from the mountains, is the valley of the Darro; you see the little river winding its way under embowered terraces and among orchards and flower gardens. It is a stream famous in old times for yielding gold, and its sands are still sifted occasionally in search of the precious ore.

Some of those white pavilions which here and there gleam from among groves and vineyards were rustic re-

treats of the Moors, to enjoy the refreshment of their gardens.

The airy palace with its tall white towers and long arcades, which breast yon mountain, among pompous groves and hanging gardens, is the Generaliffe, a summer palace of the Moorish kings, to which they resorted during the sultry months, to enjoy a still more breezy region than that of the Alhambra. The naked summit of the height above it, where you behold some shapeless ruins, is the Silla del Moro, or seat of the Moor; so called from having been a retreat of the unfortunate Boabdil during the time of an insurrection, where he seated himself and looked down mournfully upon his rebellious city.

A murmuring sound of water now and then rises from the valley. It is from the aqueduct of yon Moorish mill nearly at the foot of the hill. The avenue of trees beyond is the Alameda along the bank of the Darro, a favorite resort in evenings, and a rendezvous of lovers in the summer nights, when the guitar may be heard at a late hour from the benches along its walks. At present there are but a few loitering monks to be seen there, and a group of water carriers from the fountain of Avellanos.

You start! 'Tis nothing but a hawk we have frightened from his nest. This old tower is a complete brooding-place for vagrant birds. The swallow and martlet abound in every chink and cranny, and circle about it the whole day long; while at night, when all other birds have gone to rest, the moping owl comes out of its lurking place and utters its boding cry from the battlements. See how the hawk we have dislodged sweeps away below us, skimming over the tops of the trees, and sailing up to ruins above the Generaliffe.

Let us leave this side of the tower and turn our eyes to the west. Here you behold in the distance a range of mountains bounding the Vega, the ancient barrier between Moslem Granada and the land of the Christians. Among the heights you may still discern warrior towns, whose gray walls and battlements seem of a piece with the rocks on which they are built; while here and there is a solitary atalaya or watch-tower, mounted on some lofty point, and looking down as if it were from the sky, into the valleys on either side. It was down the defiles

of these mountains, by the pass of Lope, that the Christian armies descended into the Vega. It was round the base of yon gray and naked mountain, almost insulated from the rest, and stretching its bald, rocky promontory into the bosom of the plain, that the invading squadrons would come bursting into view, with flaunting banners and the clangor of drums and trumpets. How changed is the scene! Instead of the glittering line of mailed warriors, we behold the patient train of the toilful muleteer, slowly moving along the skirts of the mountain.

Behind that promontory is the eventful bridge of Pinos, renowned for many a bloody strife between Moors and Christians; but still more renowned as being the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella just as he was departing in despair to carry his project of discovery to the court of France.

Behold another place famous in the history of the discoverer: yon line of walls and towers, gleaming in the morning sun in the very center of the Vega; the city of Santa Fe, built by the Catholic sovereigns during the siege of Granada, after a conflagration had destroyed their camp. It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen, and within them the treaty was concluded that led to the discovery of the Western World.

Here, toward the south, the eye revels on the luxuriant beauties of the Vega, a blooming wilderness of grove and garden, and teeming orchards, with the Xenil winding through it in silver links and feeding innumerable rills, conducted through ancient Moorish channels, which maintain the landscape in perpetual verdure. Here are the beloved bowers and gardens and rural retreats for which the Moors fought with such desperate valor. The very farmhouses and hovels which are now inhabited by the boors retain traces of arabesques and other tasteful decorations, which show them to have been elegant residences in the days of the Moslems.

Beyond the embowered region of the Vega you behold, to the south, a line of arid hills down which a long train of mules is slowly moving. It was from the summit of one of those hills that the unfortunate Boabdil cast back his last look upon Granada and gave vent to the agony of

his soul. It is the spot famous in song and story, "The last sigh of the Moor."

Now raise your eyes to the snowy summit of yon pile of mountains, shining like a white summer cloud on the blue sky. It is the Sierra Nevada, the pride and delight of Granada; the source of her cooling breezes and perpetual verdure, of her gushing fountains and perennial streams. It is this glorious pile of mountains that gives to Granada that combination of delights so rare in a southern city. The fresh vegetation and the temperate airs of a northern climate, with the vivifying ardor of a tropical sun, and the cloudless azure of a southern sky. It is this ærial treasury of snow, which, melting in proportion to the increase of the summer heat, sends down rivulets and streams through every glen and gorge of the Alpuxarras, diffusing emerald verdure and fertility throughout a chain of happy and sequestered valleys.

These mountains may well be called the glory of Granada. They dominate the whole extent of Andalusia, and may be seen from its most distant parts. The muleteer hails them as he views their frosty peaks from the sultry level of the plain; and the Spanish mariner on the deck of his bark, far, far off on the bosom of the blue Mediterranean, watches them with a pensive eye, thinks of delightful Granada, and chants in low voice some old romance about the Moors.

But enough, the sun is high above the mountains, and is pouring his full fervor upon our heads. Already the terraced roof of the town is hot beneath our feet, let us abandon it, and descend and refresh ourselves under the arcades by the fountain of the Lions.

REFLECTIONS.

ON THE MOSLEM DOMINATION IN SPAIN.

ONE of my favorite resorts is the balcony of the central window of the hall of Ambassadors, in the lofty tower of Comares. I have just been seated there, enjoying the close of a long, brilliant day. The sun, as he sank behind the purple mountains of Alhama, sent a stream of effulgence up the valley of the Darro that

spread a melancholy pomp over the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while the Vega, covered with a slight sultry vapor that caught the setting ray, seemed spread out in the distance like a golden sea. Not a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the hour, and though the faint sound of music and merriment now and then arose from the gardens of the Darro, it but rendered more impressive the monumental silence of the pile which overshadowed me. It was one of those hours and scenes in which memory asserts an almost magical power, and, like the evening sun beaming on these moldering towers, sends back her retrospective rays to light up the glories of the past.

As I sat watching the effect of the declining daylight upon this Moorish pile I was led into a consideration of the light, elegant and voluptuous character prevalent throughout its internal architecture, and to contrast it with the grand but gloomy solemnity of the Gothic edifices reared by the Spanish conquerors. The very architecture thus bespeaks the opposite and irreconcilable natures of the two warlike people who so long battled here for the mastery of the peninsula. By degrees I fell into a course of musing upon the singular features of the Arabian or Morisco Spaniards, whose whole existence is as a tale that is told, and certainly forms one of the most anomalous yet splendid episodes in history. Potent and durable as was their dominion we have no one distinct title by which to designate them. They were a nation, as it were, without legitimate country or a name. A remote wave of the great Arabian inundation, cast upon the shores of Europe, they seemed to have all the impetus of the first rush of the torrent. Their course of conquest from the rock of Gibraltar to the cliffs of the Pyrenees was as rapid and brilliant as the Moslem victories of Syria and Egypt. Nay, had they not been checked on the plains of Tours, all France, all Europe, might have been overrun with the same facility as the empires of the East, and the crescent might at this day have glittered on the fanes of Paris and of London.

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa that formed this great irruption gave up the Moslem principles of conquest, and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent

dominion. As conquerors their heroism was only equaled by their moderation; and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them, as they supposed, by Allah, and strove to embellish it with everything that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the arts and sciences and promoting agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, they gradually formed an empire unrivaled for its prosperity, by any of the empires of Christendom; and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements that marked the Arabian empire in the East at the time of its greatest civilization, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the western regions of benighted Europe.

The cities of Arabian Spain became the resort of Christian artisans, to instruct themselves in the useful arts. The universities of Toledo, Cordova, Seville, and Granada were sought by the pale student from other lands, to acquaint himself with the sciences of the Arabs and the treasured lore of antiquity; the lovers of the gay sciences resorted to Cordova and Granada to imbibe the poetry and music of the East; and the steel-clad warriors of the North hastened thither to accomplish themselves in the graceful exercises and courteous usages of chivalry.

If the Moslem monuments in Spain; if the Mosque of Cordova, the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada, still bear inscriptions fondly boasting of the power and permanency of their dominion, can the boast be derided as arrogant and vain? Generation after generation, century after century had passed away, and still they maintained possession of the land. A period had elapsed longer than that which has passed since England was subjugated by the Norman conqueror; and the descendants of Musa and Tarik might as little anticipate being driven into exile, across the same straits traversed by their triumphant ancestors, as the descendants of Rollo and William and their victorious peers may dream of being driven back to the shores of Normandy.

With all this, however, the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished. Severed from all their neigh-

bors of the West by impassable barriers of faith and manners, and separated by seas and deserts from their kindred of the East, they were an isolated people. Their whole existence was a prolonged though gallant and chivalric struggle for a foothold in a usurped land. They were the outposts and frontiers of Islamism. The peninsula was the great battle ground where the Gothic conquerors of the North and the Moslem conquerors of the East met and strove for mastery; and the fiery courage of the Arab was at length subdued by the obstinate and persevering valor of the Goth.

Never was the annihilation of a people more complete than that of the Morisco Spaniards. Where are they? Ask the shores of Barbary and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once-powerful empire disappeared among the barbarians of Africa, and ceased to be a nation. They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people. The home of their adoption and of their occupation for ages refuses to acknowledge them but as invaders and usurpers. A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion, as solitary rocks felt far in the interior bear testimony to the extent of some vast inundation. Such is the Alhambra. A Moslem pile in the midst of a Christian land; an Oriental palace amid the Gothic edifices of the West; an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

It is time that I give some idea of my domestic arrangements in this singular residence. The royal palace of the Alhambra is intrusted to the care of a good old maiden dame called Doña Antonia Molina, but who, according to Spanish custom, goes by the more neighborly appellation of Tia Antonia (Aunt Antonia). She maintains the Moorish halls and gardens in order, and shows them to strangers; in consideration of which she is allowed all the perquisites received from visitors and all

the produce of the gardens, excepting that she is expected to pay an occasional tribute of fruits and flowers to the governor. Her residence is in a corner of the palace, and her family consists of a nephew and niece, the children of two different brothers. The nephew, Manuel Molina, is a young man of sterling worth and Spanish gravity. He has served in the armies both in Spain and the West Indies, but is now studying medicine in hopes of one day or other becoming physician to the fortress, a post worth at least a hundred and forty dollars a year. As to the niece, she is a plump little black-eyed Andalusian damsel named Dolores, but who from her bright looks and cheerful disposition 'merits a merrier name. She is the declared heiress of all her aunt's possessions, consisting of certain ruinous tenements in the fortress, yielding a revenue of about one hundred and fifty dollars. I had not been long in the Alhambra before I discovered that a quiet courtship was going on between the discreet Manuel and his bright-eyed cousin, and that nothing was wanting to enable them to join their hands and expectations but that he should receive his doctor's diploma, and purchase a dispensation from the pope, on account of their consanguinity.

With the good dame Antonia I have made a treaty, according to which she furnishes me with board and lodging, while the merry-hearted little Dolores keeps my apartment in order and officiates as handmaid at meal times. I have also at my command a tall, stuttering, yellow-haired lad named Pepe, who works in the garden, and would fain have acted as valet, but in this he was forestalled by Mateo Ximenes, "the son of the Alhambra." This alert and officious wight has managed, somehow or other, to stick by me ever since I first encountered him at the outer gate of the fortress, and to weave himself into all my plans, until he has fairly appointed and installed himself my valet, cicerone, guide, guard, and historiographic squire; and I have been obliged to improve the state of his wardrobe, that he may not disgrace his various functions, so that he has cast off his old brown mantle, as a snake does his skin, and now figures about the fortress with a smart Andalusian hat and jacket, to his infinite satisfaction and the great astonishment of his comrades. The chief fault of honest

Mateo is an over-anxiety to be useful. Conscious of having foisted himself into my employ, and that my simple and quiet habits render his situation a sinecure, he is at his wit's end to devise modes of making himself important to my welfare. I am in a manner the victim of his officiousness; I cannot put my foot over the threshold of the palace to stroll about the fortress but he is at my elbow to explain everything I see, and if I venture to ramble among the surrounding hills he insists upon attending me as a guard, though I vehemently suspect he would be more apt to trust to the length of his legs than the strength of his arms in case of attack. After all, however, the poor fellow is at times an amusing companion; he is simple-minded and of infinite good humor, with the loquacity and gossip of a village barber, and knows all the small talk of the place and its environs; but what he chiefly values himself on is his stock of local information, having the most marvelous stories to relate of every tower and vault and gateway of the fortress, in all of which he places the most implicit faith.

Most of these he has derived, according to his own account, from his grandfather, a little legendary tailor, who lived to the age of nearly a hundred years, during which he made but two migrations beyond the precincts of the fortress. His shop, for the greater part of a century, was the resort of a knot of venerable gossips, where they would pass half the night talking about old times and the wonderful events and hidden secrets of the place. The whole living, moving, thinking and acting of this little historical tailor had thus been bounded by the walls of the Alhambra; within them he had been born, within them he lived, breathed and had his being, within them he died and was buried. Fortunately for posterity his traditional lore died not with him. The authentic Mateo, when an urchin, used to be an attentive listener to the narratives of his grandfather and of the gossip group assembled round the shop board, and is thus possessed of a stock of valuable knowledge concerning the Alhambra not to be found in the books, and well worthy the attention of every curious traveler.

Such are the personages that contribute to my domestic comforts in the Alhambra, and I question whether any of the potentates, Moslem or Christian, who have

preceded me in the palace have been waited upon with greater fidelity or enjoyed a serener sway.

When I rise in the morning, Pepe, the stuttering lad from the gardens, brings me a tribute of fresh-culled flowers, which is afterward arranged in vases by the skillful hand of Dolores, who takes no small pride in the decorations of my chamber. My meals are made wherever caprice dictates, sometimes in one of the Moorish halls, sometimes under the arcades of the Court of Lions, surrounded by flowers and fountains; and when I walk out I am conducted by the assiduous Mateo to the most romantic retreats of the mountains and delicious haunts of the adjacent valleys, not one of which but is the scene of some wonderful tale.

Though fond of passing the greater part of my day alone, yet I occasionally repair in the evenings to the little domestic circle of Doña Antonia. This is generally held in an old Moorish chamber that serves for kitchen as well as hall, a rude fireplace having been made in one corner, the smoke from which has discolored the walls and almost obliterated the ancient arabesques. A window with a balcony overhanging the balcony of the Darro lets in the cool evening breeze, and here I take my frugal supper of fruit and milk, and mingle with the conversation of the family. There is a natural talent, or mother wit, as it is called, about the Spaniards, which renders them intellectual and agreeable companions, whatever may be their condition in life or however imperfect may have been their education; add to this, they are never vulgar; nature has endowed them with an inherent dignity of spirit. The good Tia Antonia is a woman of strong and intelligent, though uncultivated, mind, and the bright-eyed Dolores, though she has read but three or four books in the whole course of her life, has an engaging mixture of *naïveté* and good sense, and often surprises me by the pungency of her artless sallies. Sometimes the nephew entertains us by reading some old comedy of Calderon or Lope de Vega, to which he is evidently prompted by a desire to improve as well as amuse his cousin Dolores, though to his great mortification the little damsel generally falls asleep before the first act is completed. Sometimes Tia Antonia has a little bevy of humble friends and dependants, the in-

habitants of the adjacent hamlet, or the wives of the invalid soldiers. These look up to her with great deference as the custodian of the palace, and pay their court to her by bringing the news of the place, or the rumors that may have straggled up from Granada. In listening to the evening gossipings I have picked up many curious facts illustrative of the manners of the people and the peculiarities of the neighborhood.

These are simple details of simple pleasures; it is the nature of the place alone that gives them interest and importance. I tread haunted ground and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams, and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold for once a daydream realized; yet I can scarcely credit my senses or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through the Oriental chambers and hear the murmuring of fountains and the song of the nightingale: as I inhale the odor of the rose and feel the influence of the balmy climate, I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the paradise of Mohammed, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

THE TRUANT.

SINCE writing the foregoing pages we have had a scene of petty tribulation in the Alhambra which has thrown a cloud over the sunny countenance of Dolores. This little damsel has a female passion for pets of all kinds, from the superabundant kindness of her disposition. One of the ruined courts of the Alhambra is thronged with her favorites. A stately peacock and his hen seem to hold regal sway here, over pompous turkeys, querulous guinea fowls, and a rabble rout of common cocks and hens. The great delight of Dolores, however, has for some time past been centered in a youthful pair of

pigeons, who have lately entered into the holy state of wedlock, and who have even supplanted a tortoise-shell cat and kitten in her affections.

As a tenement for them to commence housekeeping she had fitted up a small chamber adjacent to the kitchen, the window of which looked into one of the quiet Moorish courts. Here they lived in happy ignorance of any world beyond the court and its sunny roofs. In vain they aspired to soar above the battlements or to mount to the summit of the towers. Their virtuous union was at length crowned by two spotless and milk-white eggs, to the great joy of their cherishing little mistress. Nothing could be more praiseworthy than the conduct of the young married folks on this interesting occasion. They took turns to sit upon the nest until the eggs were hatched, and while their callow progeny required warmth and shelter. While one thus stayed at home, the other foraged abroad for food and brought home abundant supplies.

This scene of conjugal felicity has suddenly met with a reverse. Early this morning, as Dolores was feeding the male pigeon, she took a fancy to give him a peep at the great world. Opening a window, therefore, which looks down upon the valley of the Darro, she launched him at once beyond the walls of the Alhambra. For the first time in his life the astonished bird had to try the full vigor of his wings. He swept down into the valley, and then rising upward with a surge, soared almost to the clouds. Never before had he risen to such a height or experienced such delight in flying, and like a young spendthrift, just come to his estate, he seemed giddy with excess of liberty, and with the boundless field of action suddenly opened to him. For the whole day he has been circling about in capricious flights, from tower to tower and from tree to tree. Every attempt has been made in vain to lure him back, by scattering grain upon the roofs; he seems to have lost all thought of home, of his tender helpmate and his callow young. To add to the anxiety of Dolores, he has been joined by two palomas ladrones, or robber pigeons, whose instinct it is to entice wandering pigeons to their own dove-cotes. The fugitive, like many other thoughtless youths on their first launching upon the world, seems quite fascinated

with these knowing, but graceless, companions, who have undertaken to show him life and introduce him to society. He has been soaring with them over all the roofs and steeples of Granada. A thunder shower has passed over the city, but he has not sought his home; night has closed in, and still he comes not. To deepen the pathos of the affair, the female pigeon, after remaining several hours on the nest without being relieved, at length went forth to seek her recreant mate, but stayed away so long that the young ones perished for want of the warmth and shelter of the parent bosom.

At a late hour in the evening word was brought to Dolores that the truant bird had been seen upon the towers of the Generaliffe. Now it so happens that the Administrador of that ancient palace has likewise a dove-cote, among the inmates of which are said to be two or three of these inveigling birds, the terror of all neighboring pigeon fanciers. Dolores immediately concluded that the two feathered sharpers who had been seen with her fugitive were these bloods of the Generaliffe. A council of war was forthwith held in the chamber of Tia Antonia. The Generaliffe is a distinct jurisdiction from the Alhambra, and of course some punctilio, if not jealousy, exists between their custodians. It was determined, therefore, to send Pepe, the stuttering lad of the gardens, as ambassador to the Administrador, requesting that if such fugitive should be found in his dominions he might be given up as a subject of the Alhambra. Pepe departed, accordingly, on his diplomatic expedition, through the moonlit groves and avenues, but returned in an hour with the afflicting intelligence that no such bird was to be found in the dove-cote of the Generaliffe. The Administrador, however, pledged his sovereign word that if such vagrant should appear there, even at midnight, he should instantly be arrested and sent back prisoner to his little black-eyed mistress.

Thus stands this melancholy affair, which has occasioned much distress throughout the palace, and has sent the inconsolable Dolores to a sleepless pillow.

“Sorrow endureth for a night,” says the proverb, “but joy ariseth in the morning.” The first object that met my eyes on leaving my room this morning was Dolores with the truant pigeon in her hand, and her eyes spar-

bling with joy. He had appeared at an early hour on the battlements, hovering shyly about from roof to roof, but at length entered the window and surrendered himself prisoner. He gained little credit, however, by his return, for the ravenous manner in which he devoured the food set before him showed that, like the prodigal son, he had been driven home by sheer famine. Dolores upbraided him for his faithless conduct, calling him all manner of vagrant names, though woman-like, she fondled him at the same time to her bosom and covered him with kisses. I observed, however, that she had taken care to clip his wings to prevent all future soarings; a precaution which I mention for the benefit of all those who have truant wives or wandering husbands. More than one valuable moral might be drawn from the story of Dolores and her pigeon.

THE AUTHOR'S CHAMBER.

ON taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suit of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade. The further end communicated with a cluster of little chambers, partly Moorish, partly modern, inhabited by Tia Antonia and her family. These terminated in a large room which serves the good old dame for parlor, kitchen, and hall of audience. It had boasted of some splendor in the time of the Moors, but a fireplace had been built in one corner, the smoke from which had discolored the walls, nearly obliterated the ornaments, and spread a somber tint over the whole. From these gloomy apartments a narrow blind corridor and a dark winding staircase led down an angle of the tower of Comares; groping down which, and opening a small door at the bottom, you are suddenly dazzled by emerging into the brilliant antechamber of the hall of Ambassadors, with the fountain of the court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier apartment of the palace, and longed to ensconce myself in the very heart of the building.

As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls I found, in a remote gallery, a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery. Here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty. The door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture; though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which were of deep panel-work of cedar, richly and skillfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks or faces, but broken in many places. The walls had evidently in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travelers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chambers. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the paneled ceiling were baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand, and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated. The windows were in the same shattered state as in the other chambers.

This fanciful suit of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades, which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation, along this retired little garden, that awakened an interest in its history. I found on inquiry that it was an apartment fitted up by Italian artists in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabetta of Parma were expected at the Alhambra; and was destined for the queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping-room, and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvedere, originally a mirador of the Moorish sultanas, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabetta, and which still retains the name of the Tocador, or toilette of the

queen. The sleeping-room I have mentioned commanded from one window a prospect of the Generaliffe and its embowered terraces; under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still further back, to the period of another reign of beauty—to the days of the Moorish sultanas. “How beauteous is this garden!” says an Arabic inscription, “where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven! what can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain filled with crystal water? Nothing but the moon in her fullness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky!”

Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained! The garden of Lindaraxa was still adorned with flowers; the fountain still presented its crystal mirror: it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness, and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had become the nestling place of the lizard; but there was something in the very decay that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking, as it did, of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation, too, of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabetta, had a more touching charm for me than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendor, glittering with the pageantry of a court—I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

My determination excited great surprise in the family, who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote and forlorn an apartment. The good Tia Antonia considered it highly dangerous. The neighborhood, she said, was infested by vagrants; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gypsies; the palace was ruinous and easy to be entered in many parts; and the rumor of a stranger quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visitors in the night, especially as foreigners are always supposed to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place; nothing but bats and owls flitting about; then there were a fox and a wild cat that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

I was not to be diverted from my humor, so calling in

the assistance of a carpenter and the ever-officious Mateo Ximenes, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security.

With all these precautions, I must confess the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber, and their taking leave of me, and retiring along the waste antechamber and echoing galleries reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of a haunted house.

Soon the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now by a perversion of fancy added to the gloom. Here was the scene of their transient gayety and loveliness; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment; but what and where were they?—Dust and ashes! tenants of the tomb! phantoms of the memory!

A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers, awakened by the evening's conversation, but I felt that it was something more unusual and absurd. In a word, the long-buried impressions of the nursery were reviving and asserting their power over my imagination. Everything began to be affected by the workings of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron-trees beneath my window had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets had indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window; but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in, and flitted about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

Rousing myself and half-smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it, and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a limited distance around me; I walked as it were in a mere halo of light, and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were as caverns; the vaults of the halls were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me; my own shadow playing

about the walls and the echoes of my own footsteps disturbed me.

In this excited state, as I was traversing the great hall of Ambassadors, there were added real sounds to these conjectural fancies. Low moans and indistinct ejaculations seemed to rise as it were from beneath my feet; I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an animal, at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds in that still hour and singular place destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacidity than I had sallied forth, and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls and the door bolted behind me.

When I woke in the morning, with the sun shining in at my window and lighting up every part of the building with its cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night, or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

Still the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard were not ideal; but they were soon accounted for by my handmaid Dolores; being the ravings of a poor maniac, a brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the hall of Ambassadors.

THE ALHAMBRA BY MOONLIGHT.

I HAVE given a picture of my apartment on my first taking possession of it; a few evenings have produced a thorough change in the scene and in my feelings. The moon, which then was invisible, has gradually gained upon the nights, and now rolls in full splendor above the towers, pouring a flood of tempered light into every court and hall. The garden beneath my window is gently lighted up; the orange and citron trees are tipped with silver; the fountain sparkles in the moonbeams, and even the blush of the rose is faintly visible.

I have sat for hours at my window inhaling the sweetness of the garden and musing on the checkered features of those whose history is dimly shadowed out in the elegant memorials around. Sometimes I have issued forth at midnight when everything was quiet, and have wandered over the whole building. Who can do justice to a moonlight night in such a climate and in such a place! The temperature of an Andalusian midnight, in summer, is perfectly ethereal. We seem lifted up into a purer atmosphere; there is a serenity of soul, a buoyancy of spirits, an elasticity of frame that render mere existence enjoyment. The effect of moonlight, too, on the Alhambra has something like enchantment. Every rent and chasm of time, every moldering tint and weather stain disappears; the marble resumes its original whiteness; the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams; the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance, until the whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale.

At such time I have ascended to the little pavilion, called the Queen's Toilette, to enjoy its varied and extensive prospect. To the right the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada would gleam like silver clouds against the darker firmament, and all the outlines of the mountain would be softened, yet delicately defined. My delight, however, would be to lean over the parapet of the tocador, and gaze down upon Granada, spread out like a map below me, all buried in deep repose, and its white palaces and convents sleeping as it were in the moonshine.

Sometimes I would hear the faint sounds of castanets from some party of dancers lingering in the Alameda; at other times I have heard the dubious tones of a guitar and the notes of a single voice rising from some solitary street, and have pictured to myself some youthful cavalier serenading his lady's window—a gallant custom of former days, but now sadly on the decline except in the remote towns and villages of Spain.

Such are the scenes that have detained me for many an hour loitering about the courts and balconies of the castle, enjoying that mixture of reverie and sensation which steal away existence in a southern climate—and it has been almost morning before I have retired to my bed and been lulled to sleep by the falling waters of the fountain of Lindaraxa.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALHAMBRA.

I HAVE often observed that the more proudly a mansion has been tenanted in the day of its prosperity the humbler are its inhabitants in the day of its decline, and that the palace of the king commonly ends in being the nestling place of the beggar.

The Alhambra is in a rapid state of similar transition: whenever a tower falls to decay it is seized upon by some tatterdemalion family, who become joint tenants with the bats and owls of its gilded halls, and hang their rags, those standards of poverty, out of its windows and loopholes.

I have amused myself with remarking some of the motley characters that have thus usurped the ancient abode of royalty, and who seem as if placed here to give a farcical termination to the drama of human pride. One of these even bears the mockery of a royal title. It is a little old woman named Maria Antonia Sabonea, but who goes by the appellation of la Reyna Cuquina, or the cockle queen. She is small enough to be a fairy, and a fairy she may be for aught I can find out, for no one seems to know her origin. Her habitation is a kind of closet under the outer staircase of the palace, and she sits in the cool stone corridor plying her needle and singing from morning till night, with a ready joke for every one that passes, for though one of the poorest she is one of the merriest little women breathing. Her great merit is a gift for story-telling; having, I verily believe, as many stories at her command as the inexhaustible Scheherezade of the thousand and one nights. Some of these I have heard her relate in the evening tertulias of Doña Antonia, at which she is occasionally an humble attendant.

That there must be some fairy gift about this mysterious little old woman, would appear from her extraordinary luck, since, notwithstanding her being very little, very ugly, and very poor, she has had, according to her own account, five husbands and a half; reckoning as a half, one, a young dragoon, who died during courtship.

A rival personage to this little fairy queen is a portly old fellow with a bottle nose, who goes about in a rusty

garb, with a cocked hat of oil skin and a red cockade. He is one of the legitimate sons of the Alhambra, and has lived here all his life, filling various offices; such as deputy alguazil, sexton of the parochial church, and marker of a fives court established at the foot of one of the towers. He is as poor as a rat, but as proud as he is ragged, boasting of his descent from the illustrious house of Aguilar, from which sprang Gonsalvo of Cordova, the Grand Captain. Nay, he actually bears the name of Alonzo de Aguilar, so renowned in the history of the conquest, though the graceless wags of the fortress have given him the title of *el Padre Santo*, or the Holy Father, the usual appellation of the pope, which I had thought too sacred in the eyes of true Catholics to be thus ludicrously applied. It is a whimsical caprice of fortune to present in the grotesque person of this tatterdemalion a namesake and descendant of the proud Alonzo de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry, leading an almost mendicant existence about this once haughty fortress, which his ancestor aided to reduce; yet such might have been the lot of the descendants of Agamemnon and Achilles, had they lingered about the ruins of Troy.

Of this motley community I find the family of my gossiping squire Mateo Ximenes to form, from their numbers at least, a very important part. His boast of being a son of the Alhambra is not unfounded. This family has inhabited the fortress ever since the time of the conquest, handing down a hereditary poverty from father to son, not one of them having ever been known to be worth a marevedi. His father, by trade a ribbon weaver, and who succeeded the historical tailor as the head of the family, is now near seventy years of age, and lives in a hovel of reeds and plaster, built by his own hands, just above the iron gate. The furniture consists of a crazy bed, a table, and two or three chairs; a wooden chest, containing his clothes and the archives of his family; that is to say, a few papers concerning old law-suits which he cannot read; but the pride of his heart is a blazon of the arms of the family, brilliantly colored and suspended in a frame against the wall, clearly demonstrating by its quarterings the various noble houses with which this poverty-stricken brood claim affinity.

As to Mateo himself he has done his utmost to perpetuate his line; having a wife and a numerous progeny who inhabit an almost dismantled hovel in the hamlet. How they manage to subsist, He only who sees into all mysteries can tell—the subsistence of a Spanish family of the kind is always a riddle to me; yet they do subsist, and, what is more, appear to enjoy their existence. The wife takes her holiday stroll in the Paseo of Granada with a child in her arms, and half a dozen at her heels, and the eldest daughter, now verging into womanhood, dresses her hair with flowers, and dances gayly to the castanets.

There are two classes of people to whom life seems one long holiday, the very rich and the very poor; one because they need do nothing, the other because they have nothing to do; but there are none who understand the art of doing nothing and living upon nothing better than the poor classes of Spain. Climate does one half and temperament the rest. Give a Spaniard the shade in summer, and the sun in winter, a little bread, garlic, oil and garbanzos, an old brown cloak and a guitar, and let the world roll on as it pleases. Talk of poverty, with him it has no disgrace. It sits upon him with a grandioso style, like his ragged cloak. He is a hidalgo even when in rags.

The “Sons of the Alhambra” are an eminent illustration of this practical philosophy. As the Moors imagined that the celestial paradise hung over this favored spot, so I am inclined at times to fancy that a gleam of the golden age still lingers about this ragged community. They possess nothing, they do nothing, they care for nothing. Yet, though apparently idle all the week, they are as observant of all holydays and saints’ days as the most laborious artisan. They attend all *fêtes* and dancings in Granada and its vicinity, light bonfires on the hills on St. John’s Eve, and have lately danced away the moonlight nights, on the harvest home of a small field of wheat within the precincts of the fortress.

Before concluding these remarks I must mention one of the amusements of the place which has particularly struck me. I had repeatedly observed a long, lean fellow perched on the top of one of the towers maneuvering two or three fishing rods, as though he was angling for the

stars. I was for some time perplexed by the evolutions of this aerial fisherman, and my perplexity increased on observing others employed in like manner, on different parts of the battlements and bastions; it was not until I consulted Mateo Ximenes that I solved the mystery.

It seems that the pure and airy situation of this fortress has rendered it, like the castle of Macbeth, a prolific breeding-place for swallows and martlets, who sport about its towers in myriads, with the holiday glee of urchins just let loose from school. To entrap these birds in their giddy circlings, with hooks baited with flies, is one of the favorite amusements of the ragged "Sons of the Alhambra," who, with the good-for-nothing ingenuity of arrant idlers, have thus invented the art of angling in the sky.

THE BALCONY.

IN the hall of Ambassadors, at the central window, there is a balcony of which I have already made mention. It projects like a cage from the face of the tower, high in midair, above the tops of the trees that grow on the steep hillside. It answers me as a kind of observatory, where I often take my seat to consider, not merely the heavens above, but the "earth beneath." Beside the magnificent prospect which it commands, of mountain, valley, and Vega, there is a busy little scene of human life laid open to inspection immediately below. At the foot of the hill is an alameda or public walk, which, though not so fashionable as the more modern and splendid paseo of the Xenil, still boasts a varied and picturesque concourse, especially on holidays and Sundays. Hither resort the small gentry of the suburbs, together with priests and friars who walk for appetite and digestion; majos and majas, the beaux and belles of the lower classes in their Andalusian dresses; swagging contrabandistas, and sometimes half-muffled and mysterious loungers of the higher ranks, on some silent assignation.

It is a moving picture of Spanish life which I delight to study; and as the naturalist has his microscope to as-

sist him in his curious investigations, so I have a small pocket telescope which brings the countenances of the motley groups so close as almost at times to make me think I can divine their conversation by the play and expression of their features. I am thus, in a manner, an invisible observer, and without quitting my solitude, can throw myself in an instant into the midst of society—a rare advantage to one of somewhat shy and quiet habits.

Then there is a considerable suburb lying below the Alhambra, filling the narrow gorge of the valley, and extending up the opposite hill of the Albaycin. Many of the houses are built in the Moorish style, round patios or courts cooled by fountains and open to the sky; and as the inhabitants pass much of their time in these courts and on the terraced roofs during the summer season, it follows that many a glance at their domestic life may be obtained by an aerial spectator like myself, who can look down on them from the clouds.

I enjoy, in some degree, the advantages of the student in the famous old Spanish story, who beheld all Madrid unroofed for his inspection; and my gossiping squire, Mateo Ximenes, officiates occasionally as my Asmodeus, to give me anecdotes of the different mansions and their inhabitants.

I prefer, however, to form conjectural histories for myself; and thus can sit up aloft for hours, weaving from casual incidents and indications that pass under my eye the whole tissue of schemes, intrigues and occupations, carrying on by certain of the busy mortals below us. There is scarce a pretty face or striking figure that I daily see, about which I have not thus gradually framed a dramatic story; though some of my characters will occasionally act in direct opposition to the part assigned them, and disconcert my whole drama.

A few days since, as I was reconnoitering with my glass the streets of the Albaycin, I beheld the procession of a novice about to take the veil; and remarked various circumstances that excited the strongest sympathy in the fate of the youthful being thus about to be consigned to a living tomb. I ascertained, to my satisfaction, that she was beautiful; and, by the paleness of her cheek, that she was a victim rather than a votary. She was arrayed in bridal garments and decked with a chaplet of white

flowers; but her heart evidently revolted at this mockery of a spiritual union, and yearned after its earthly loves. A tall stern-looking man walked near her in the procession; it was evidently the tyrannical father, who, from some bigoted or sordid motive, had compelled this sacrifice. Amid the crowd was a dark, handsome youth, in Adalusian garb, who seemed to fix on her an eye of agony. It was doubtless the secret lover from whom she was forever to be separated. My indignation rose as I noted the malignant exultation painted in the countenances of the attendant monks and friars. The procession arrived at the chapel of the convent; the sun gleamed for the last time upon the chaplet of the poor novice as she crossed the fatal threshold and disappeared from sight. The throng poured in with cowl and cross and minstrelsy. The lover paused for a moment at the door; I could understand the tumult of his feelings, but he mastered them and entered. There was a long interval—I pictured to myself the scene passing within. The poor novice despoiled of her transient finery—clothed in the conventual garb; the bridal chaplet taken from her brow; her beautiful head shorn of its long silken tresses—I heard her murmur the irrevocable vow—I saw her extended on her bier; the death pall spread over; the funeral service performed that proclaimed her dead to the world; her sighs were drowned in the wailing anthem of the nuns and the sepulchral tones of the organ—the father looked unmoved, without a tear—the lover—no—my fancy refused to portray the anguish of the lover—there the picture remained a blank. The ceremony was over: the crowd again issued forth to behold the day and mingle in the joyous stir of life—but the victim with her bridal chaplet was no longer there—the door of the convent closed that secured her from the world forever. I saw the father and the lover issue forth—they were in earnest conversation—the young man was violent in his gestures, when the wall of a house intervened and shut them from my sight.

That evening I noticed a solitary light twinkling from a remote lattice of the convent. There, said I, the unhappy novice sits weeping in her cell, while her lover paces the street below in unavailing anguish.

The officious Mateo interrupted my meditations and

destroyed, in an instant, the cobweb tissue of my fancy. With his usual zeal he had gathered facts concerning the scene that had interested me. The heroine of my romance was neither young nor handsome—she had no lover—she had entered the convent of her own free will, as a respectable asylum, and was one of the cheerfulest residents within its walls!

I felt at first half-vexed with the nun for being thus happy in her cell, in contradiction to all the rules of romance; but diverted my spleen by watching, for a day or two, the pretty coquetries of a dark-eyed brunette, who, from the covert of a balcony shrouded with flowering shrubs and a silken awning, was carrying on a mysterious correspondence with a handsome dark, well-whiskered cavalier in the street beneath her window. Sometimes I saw him at an early hour, stealing forth, wrapped to the eyes in a mantle. Sometimes he loitered at the corner, in various disguises, apparently waiting for a private signal to slip into the bower. Then there was a tinkling of a guitar at night, and a lantern shifted from place to place in the balcony. I imagined another romantic intrigue like that of *Almaviva*, but was again disconcerted in all my suppositions by being informed that the supposed lover was the husband of the lady, and a noted contrabandista, and that all his mysterious signs and movements had doubtless some smuggling scheme in view.

Scarce had the gray dawn streaked the sky and the earliest cock crowed from the cottages of the hillside, when the suburbs gave sign of reviving animation; for the fresh hours of dawning are precious in the summer season in a sultry climate. All are anxious to get the start of the sun in the business of the day. The muleteer drives forth his loaded train for the journey; the traveler slings his carbine behind his saddle and mounts his steed at the gate of the hostel. The brown peasant urges his loitering donkeys, laden with panniers of sunny fruit and fresh dewy vegetables; for already the thrifty housewives are hastening to the market.

The sun is up and sparkles along the valley, topping the transparent foliage of the groves. The matin bells resound melodiously through the pure bright air, announcing the hour of devotion. The muleteer halts his

burdened animals before the chapel, thrusts his staff through his belt behind, and enters with hat in hand, smoothing his coal-black hair, to hear a mass and put up a prayer for a prosperous wayfaring across the Sierra.

And now steals forth with fairy foot the gentle señora, in trim busquina; with restless fan in hand and dark eye flashing from beneath her gracefully folded mantilla. She seeks some well frequented church to offer up her orisons; but the nicely adjusted dress, the dainty shoe and cobweb stocking, the raven tresses scrupulously braided, the fresh-plucked rose that gleams among them like a gem, show that earth divides with heaven the empire of her thoughts.

As the morning advances the din of labor augments on every side; the streets are thronged with man, and steed, and beast of burden; the universal movement produces a hum and murmur like the surges of the ocean. As the sun ascends to his meridian the hum and bustle gradually decline; at the height of noon there is a pause; the panting city sinks into lassitude, and for several hours there is a general repose. The windows are closed; the curtains drawn; the inhabitants retired into the coolest recesses of their mansions. The full-fed monk snores in his dormitory. The brawny porter lies stretched on the pavement beside his burden. The peasant and the laborer sleep beneath the trees of the Alameda, lulled by the sultry chirping of the locust. The streets are deserted except by the water carrier, who refreshes the ear by proclaiming the merits of his sparkling beverage—"Colder than mountain snow."

As the sun declines there is again a gradual reviving, and when the vesper bell rings out his sinking knell all nature seems to rejoice that the tyrant of the day has fallen. Now begins the bustle of enjoyment. The citizens pour forth to breathe the evening air, and revel away the brief twilight in the walks and gardens of the Darro and the Xenil.

As the night closes the motley scene assumes new features. Light after light gradually twinkles forth—here a taper from a balconied window; there a votive lamp before the image of a saint. Thus by degrees the city emerges from the pervading gloom, and sparkles with scattered lights like the starry firmament. Now break

forth from court, and garden, and street, and lane, the tinkling of innumerable guitars and the clicking of castanets, blending at this lofty height in a faint and general concert. "Enjoy the moment," is the creed of the gay and amorous Andalusian, and at no time does he practice it more zealously than in the balmy nights of summer, wooing his mistress with the dance, the love ditty and the passionate serenade.

I was seated one evening in the balcony enjoying the light breeze that came rustling along the side of the hill among the tree-tops, when my humble historiographer, Mateo, who was at my elbow, pointed out a spacious house in an obscure street of the Albaycin, about which he related, as nearly as I can recollect, the following anecdote.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON.

THERE was once upon a time a poor mason, or brick-layer, in Granada, who kept all the saints' days and holy-days, and saint Monday into the bargain, and yet, with all his devotion, he grew poorer and poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it and beheld before him a tall, meager, cadaverous-looking priest. "Hark ye, honest friend," said the stranger, "I have observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?"

"With all my heart, Señor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly."

"That you shall be, but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded."

To this the mason made no objection; so being hood-winked, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor and spacious hall, to an interior part of the building.

Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a patio, or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp.

In the center was a dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before daybreak the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

"Are you willing," said he, "to return and complete your work?"

"Gladly, Señor Padre, provided I am as well paid."

"Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again."

He did so, and the vault was completed. "Now," said the priest, "you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault."

The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words; he followed the priest with trembling steps into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on perceiving three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great labor that he and the priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced and all traces of the work obliterated.

The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand. "Wait here," said he, "until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time evil will befall you." So saying he departed.

The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rang its matin peal he uncovered his eyes and found himself on the banks of the Xenil; from whence he made the best of his way home, and reveled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights' work, after which he was as poor as ever.

He continued to work a little and pray a good deal, and keep holydays and saints' days from year to year, while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gypsies.

As he was seated one morning at the door of his hovel he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon who was noted for owning many houses and being a griping landlord.

The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of shagged eyebrows.

"I am told, friend, that you are very poor."

"There is no denying the fact, señor; it speaks for itself."

"I presume, then, you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap."

"As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada."

"That's what I want. I have an old house fallen to decay, that costs me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible."

The mason was accordingly conducted to a huge deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain.

He paused for a moment. "It seems," said he, "as if I had been in this place before; but it is like a dream. Pray who occupied this house formerly?"

"A pest upon him!" cried the landlord. "It was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich, and, having no relations, it was thought he would leave all his treasure to the church. He died suddenly, and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth, but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leathern purse. The worst luck has fallen on me; for since his death the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and there's no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear at night the clinking of gold all night long in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false these stories have brought a bad name on my house, and not a tenant will remain in it."

“Enough,” said the mason sturdily—“let me live in your house rent free until some better tenant presents, and I will engage to put it in repair and quiet the troubled spirits that disturb it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, and am not to be daunted by the devil himself, even though he come in the shape of a big bag of money.”

The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted; he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state. The clinking of gold was no longer heard at night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbors, and became one of the richest men in Granada. He gave large sums to the church, by way, no doubt, of satisfying his conscience, and never revealed the secret of his wealth until on his deathbed, to his son and heir.

A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS.

I FREQUENTLY amuse myself toward the close of the day, when the heat has subsided, with taking long rambles about the neighboring hills and the deep umbrageous valleys, accompanied by my historiographer Squire Mateo, to whose passion for gossiping I, on such occasions, give the most unbounding license; and there is scarce a rock or ruin, or broken fountain, or lonely glen, about which he has not some marvelous story; or above all, some golden legend; for never was poor devil so munificent in dispensing hidden treasures.

A few evenings since we took a long stroll of the kind, in which Mateo was more than usually communicative. It was toward sunset that we sallied forth from the great Gate of Justice, and ascending an alley of trees, Mateo paused under a clump of fig and pomegranate trees at the foot of a huge ruined tower, called the Tower of the Seven Vaults (*de los siete suelos*). Here, pointing to a low archway at the foundation of the tower, he informed me in an undertone, was the lurking place of a mon-

strous sprite or hobgoblin called the Belludo, which had infested the tower ever since the time of the Moors; guarding, it is supposed, the treasures of a Moorish king. Sometimes it issues forth in the dead of the night, and scours the avenues of the Alhambra and the streets of Granada in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six dogs, with terrific yells and howlings.

“But have you ever met with it yourself, Mateo, in any of your rambles?”

“No, señor; but my grandfather, the tailor, knew several persons who had seen it; for it went about much more in his time than at present: sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another. Everybody in Granada has heard of the Belludo, for the old women and nurses frighten the children with it when they cry. Some say it is the spirit of a cruel Moorish king, who killed his six sons and buried them in these vaults, and that they hunt him at nights in revenge.”

Mateo went on to tell many particulars about this redoubtable hobgoblin, which has, in fact, been time out of mind a favorite theme of nursery tale and popular tradition in Granada, and is mentioned in some of the antiquated guide-books. When he had finished we passed on, skirting the fruitful orchards of the Generaliffe, among the trees of which two or three nightingales were pouring forth a rich strain of melody. Behind these orchards we passed a number of Moorish tanks, with a door cut into the rocky bosom of the hill, but closed up. These tanks, Mateo informed me, were favorite bathing-places of himself and his comrades in boyhood, until frightened away by a story of a hideous Moor, who used to issue forth from the door in the rock to entrap unwary bathers.

Leaving these haunted tanks behind us, we pursued our ramble up a solitary mule-path that wound among the hills, and soon found ourselves amid wild and melancholy mountains, destitute of trees, and here and there tinted with scanty verdure. Everything within sight was severe and sterile, and it was scarcely possible to realize the idea that but a short distance behind us was the Generaliffe, with its blooming orchards and terraced gardens, and that we were in the vicinity of delicious Granada, that city of groves and fountains. But such

is the nature of Spain—wild and stern the moment it escapes from cultivation, the desert and the garden are ever side by side.

The narrow defile up which we were passing is called, according to Mateo, *el Barranco de la Tinaja*, or the ravine of the jar.

“And why so, Mateo?” inquired I.

“Because, señor, a jar full of Moorish gold was found here in old times.” The brain of poor Mateo is continually running upon these golden legends.

“But what is the meaning of the cross I see yonder upon a heap of stones in that narrow part of the ravine?”

“Oh! that’s nothing—a muleteer was murdered there some years since.”

“So then, Mateo, you have robbers and murderers even at the gates of the Alhambra.”

“Not at present, señor—that was formerly, when there used to be many loose fellows about the fortress; but they’ve all been weeded out. Not but that the gypsies, who live in caves in the hillsides just out of the fortress, are, many of them, fit for anything; but we have had no murder about here for a long time past. The man who murdered the muleteer was hanged in the fortress.”

Our path continued up the barranco, with a bold, rugged height to our left, called the *Silla del Moro*, or chair of the Moor; from a tradition that the unfortunate Boabdil fled thither during a popular insurrection, and remained all day seated on the rocky summit, looking mournfully down upon his factious city.

We at length arrived on the highest part of the promontory above Granada, called the Mountain of the Sun. The evening was approaching; the setting sun just gilded the loftiest heights. Here and there a solitary shepherd might be descried driving his flock down the declivities to be folded for the night, or a muleteer and his lagging animals threading some mountain path, to arrive at the city gates before nightfall.

Presently the deep tones of the cathedral bell came swelling up the defiles, proclaiming the hour of *Oracion’s* or prayer. The note was responded to from the belfry of every church, and from the sweet bells of the convents among the mountains. The shepherd paused on the

fold of the hill, the muleteer in the midst of the road; each took off his hat, and remained motionless for a time, murmuring his evening prayer. There is always something solemn and pleasing in this custom, by which at a melodious signal every human being throughout the land recites, at the same moment, a tribute of thanks to God for the mercies of the day. It diffuses a transient sanctity over the land, and the sight of the sun sinking in all his glory adds not a little to the solemnity of the scene. In the present instance the effect was heightened by the wild and lonely nature of the place. We were on the naked and broken summit of the haunted Mountain of the Sun, where ruined tanks and cisterns, and the moldering foundations of extensive buildings, spoke of former populousness, but where all was now silent and desolate.

As we were wandering among these traces of old times Mateo pointed out to me a circular pit that seemed to penetrate deep into the bosom of the mountain. It was evidently a deep well, dug by the indefatigable Moors to obtain their favorite element in its greatest purity. Mateo, however, had a different story, and much more to his humor. This was, according to tradition, an entrance to the subterranean caverns of the mountain, in which Boabdil and his court lay bound in magic spell; and from whence they sallied forth at night, at allotted times, to revisit their ancient abodes.

The deepening twilight, which in this climate is of such short duration, admonished us to leave this haunted ground. As we descended the mountain defiles there was no longer herdsman or muleteer to be seen, nor anything to be heard but our own footsteps and the lonely chirping of the cricket. The shadows of the valleys grew deeper and deeper, until all was dark around us. The lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada alone retained a lingering gleam of daylight, its snowy peaks glaring against the dark-blue firmament, and seeming close to us, from the extreme purity of the atmosphere.

“How near the Sierra looks this evening!” said Mateo; “it seems as if you could touch it with your hand, and yet it is many long leagues off.” While he was speaking a star appeared over the snowy summit of the mountain, the only one yet visible in the heavens, and so pure, so

large, so bright and beautiful as to call forth ejaculations of delight from honest Mateo.

“Que lucero hermoso!—que claro y limpio es! no pueda ser luceor mas brillante!”

(What a beautiful star!—how clear and lucid! no star could be more brilliant!)

I have often remarked this sensibility of the common people of Spain to the charms of natural objects. The luster of a star—the beauty or fragrance of a flower—the crystal purity of a fountain will inspire them with a kind of poetical delight—and then what euphonious words their magnificent language affords, with which to give utterance to their transports!

“But what lights are those, Mateo, which I see twinkling along the Sierra Nevada, just below the snowy region, and which might be taken for stars, only that they are ruddy and against the dark side of the mountain?”

“Those, señor, are fires made by the men who gather snow and ice for the supply of Granada. They go up every afternoon with mules and asses, and take turns, some to rest and warm themselves by the fires, while others fill their panniers with ice. They then set off down the mountain, so as to reach the gates of Granada before sunrise. That Sierra Nevada, señor, is a lump of ice in the middle of Andalusia, to keep it all cool in summer.”

It was now completely dark; we were passing through the barranco where stood the cross of the murdered muleteer, when I beheld a number of lights moving at a distance and apparently advancing up the ravine. On nearer approach they proved to be torches borne by a train of uncouth figures arrayed in black; it would have been a procession dreary enough at any time, but was peculiarly so in this wild and solitary place.

Mateo drew near, and told me in a low voice that it was a funeral train bearing a corpse to the burying ground among the hills.

As the procession passed by the lugubrious light of the torches, falling on the rugged features and funeral weeds of the attendants, had the most fantastic effect, but was perfectly ghastly as it revealed the countenance of the corpse, which, according to Spanish custom, was

borne uncovered on an open bier. I remained for some time gazing after the dreary train as it wound up the dark defile of the mountain. It put me in mind of the old story of a procession of demons, bearing the body of a sinner up the crater of Stromboli.

“Ah, señor,” cried Mateo, “I could tell you a story of a procession once seen among these mountains—but then you would laugh at me, and say it was one of the legacies of my grandfather the tailor.”

“By no means, Mateo. There is nothing I relish more than a marvelous tale.”

“Well, señor, it is about one of those very men we have been talking of, who gather snow on the Sierra Nevada. You must know that a great many years since, in my grandfather’s time, there was an old fellow, Tio Nicolo by name, who had filled the panniers of his mules with snow and ice, and was returning down the mountain. Being very drowsy, he mounted upon the mule, and soon falling asleep, went with his head nodding and bobbing about from side to side, while his sure-footed old mule stepped along the edge of precipices, and down steep and broken barrancos just as safe and steady as if it had been on plain ground. At length Tio Nicolo awoke, and gazed about him, and rubbed his eyes—and in good truth he had reason—the moon shone almost as bright as day, and he saw the city below him, as plain as your hand, and shining with its white buildings like a silver platter in the moonshine; but lord! señor—it was nothing like the city he left a few hours before. Instead of the cathedral with its great dome and turrets, and the churches with their spires, and the convents with their pinnacles all surmounted with the blessed cross, he saw nothing but Moorish mosques, and minarets, and cupolas, all topped off with glittering crescents, such as you see on the Barbary flags. Well, señor, as you may suppose, Tio Nicolo was mightily puzzled at all this, but while he was gazing down upon the city a great army came marching up the mountain, winding along the ravines, sometimes in the moonshine, sometimes in the shade. As it drew nigh he saw that there were horse and foot, all in Moorish armor. Tio Nicolo tried to scramble out of their way, but his old mule stood stock still and refused to budge, trembling at the same time like a leaf—

for dumb beasts, señor, are just as much frightened at such things as human beings. Well, señor, the hobgoblin army came marching by; there were men that seemed to blow trumpets, and others to beat drums and strike cymbals, yet never a sound did they make; they all moved on without the least noise, just as I have seen painted armies move across the stage in the theater of Granada, and all looked as pale as death. At last in the rear of the army, between two black Moorish horsemen, rode the grand inquisitor of Granada, on a mule as white as snow. Tio Nicolo wondered to see him in such company; for the inquisitor was famous for his hatred of Moors, and indeed of all kinds of infidels, Jews and heretics, and used to hunt them out with fire and scourge—however, Tio Nicolo felt himself safe, now that there was a priest of such sanctity at hand. So, making the sign of the cross, he called out for his benediction, when—hombre! he received a blow that sent him and his old mule over the edge of a steep bank, down which they rolled, head over heels, to the bottom. Tio Nicolo did not come to his senses until long after sunrise, when he found himself at the bottom of a deep ravine, his mule grazing beside him, and his panniers of snow completely melted. He crawled back to Granada sorely bruised and battered, and was glad to find the city looking as usual, with Christian churches and crosses. When he told the story of his night's adventure every one laughed at him: some said he had dreamed it all, as he dozed on his mule, others thought it all a fabrication of his own. But what was strange, señor, and made people afterward think more seriously of the matter, was, that the grand inquisitor died within the year. I have often heard my grandfather, the tailor, say that there was more meant by that hobgoblin army bearing off the resemblance of the priest than folks dared to surmise."

"Then you would insinuate, friend Mateo, that there is a kind of Moorish limbo, or purgatory, in the bowels of these mountains, to which the padre inquisitor was borne off."

"God forbid—señor—I know nothing of the matter—I only relate what I heard from my grandfather."

By the time Mateo had finished the tale which I have more succinctly related, and which was interlarded with

many comments, and spun out with minute details, we reached the gate of the Alhambra.

THE COURT OF LIONS.

THE peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past, and thus clothing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these "vain shadows," I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favorable to this phantasmagoria of the mind; and none are more so than the Court of Lions and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest, and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendor exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile, and rent its rudest towers, yet see—not one of those slender columns has been displaced, not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way, and all the fairy fretwork of these domes, apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost, yet exist after the lapse of centuries, almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist.

I write in the midst of these momentos of the past, in the fresh hour of early morning, in the fated hall of the Abencerrages. The blood-stained fountain, the legendary monument of their massacre, is before me; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the ancient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around. Everything here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings, for everything is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above, through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal I behold the Court of Lions, with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades and sparkling in its fountains. The lively swallow dives into the court, and then surging upward, darts away twittering over the roof; the busy bee toils humming among the flower-beds, and painted butterflies hover from plant to plant, and flutter up, and sport with

each other in the sunny air. It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem, loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

He, however, who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes, let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the court and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls—then nothing can be more serenely melancholy or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice, whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the court. Here were performed, in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella, and their triumphant court, the pompous ceremonies of high mass, on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall, where the altar was erected, and where officiated the grand cardinal of Spain, and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land.

I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host, that mixture of mitred prelate, and shorn monk, and steel-clad knight, and silken courtier: when cross and croziers and religious standards were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain, and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus, the future discoverer of a world, taking his modest stand in a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar and pouring forth thanks for their victory, while the vaults resound with sacred minstrelsy and the deep-toned *Te Deum*.

The transient illusion is over—the pageant melts from the fancy—monarch, priest, and warrior return into oblivion, with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of their triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vaults, and the owl hoots from the neighboring tower of Comares. The Court of the Lions has also its share of supernatural legends. I have already mentioned the belief in the murmuring of voices and clanking of chains, made at night by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages. Mateo Ximenes, a few

evenings since, at one of the gatherings in Dame Antonia's apartment, related a fact which happened within the knowledge of his grandfather, the legendary tailor. There was an invalid soldier, who had charge of the Alhambra, to show it to strangers. As he was one evening about twilight passing through the Court of Lions he heard footsteps in the Hall of the Abencerrages. Supposing some loungers to be lingering there, he advanced to attend upon them, when, to his astonishment, he beheld four Moors richly dressed, with gilded cuirasses and scimitars, and poniards glittering with precious stones. They were walking to and fro with solemn pace, but paused and beckoned to him. The old soldier, however, took to flight; and could never afterward be prevailed upon to enter the Alhambra. Thus it is that men sometimes turn their backs upon fortune; for it is the firm opinion of Mateo that the Moors intended to reveal the place where their treasures lay buried. A successor to the invalid soldier was more knowing; he came to the Alhambra poor, but at the end of a year went off to Malaga, bought horses, set up a carriage, and still lives there, one of the richest as well as oldest men of the place: all which, Mateo sagely surmises, was in consequence of his finding out the golden secret of these phantom Moors.

On entering the Court of the Lions a few evenings since, I was startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly seated near the fountain. It seemed, for a moment, as if one of the stories of Mateo Ximenes were realized, and some ancient inhabitant of the Alhambra had broken the spell of centuries and become visible. It proved, however, to be a mere ordinary mortal; a native of Tetuan in Barbary, who had a shop in the Zacatin of Granada, where he sold rhubarb, trinkets, and perfumes. As he spoke Spanish fluently, I was enabled to hold conversation with him, and found him shrewd and intelligent. He told me that he came up the hill occasionally in the summer, to pass a part of the day in the Alhambra, which reminded him of the old palaces in Barbary, which were built and adorned in similar style, though with less magnificence.

As we walked about the palace he pointed out several of the Arabic inscriptions, as possessing much poetic beauty.

“Ah! señor,” said he, “when the Moors held Granada they were a gayer people than they are nowadays. They thought only of love, of music, and of poetry. They made stanzas upon every occasion, and set them all to music. He who could make the best verses, and she who had the most tuneful voice, might be sure of favor and preferment. In those days, if any one asked for bread the reply was, ‘Make me a couplet;’ and the poorest beggar, if he begged in rhyme, would often be rewarded with a piece of gold.”

“And is the popular feeling for poetry,” said I, “entirely lost among you?”

“By no means, señor: the people of Barbary, even those of the lower classes, still make couplets, and good ones too, as in the old time, but talent is not rewarded as it was then: the rich prefer the jingle of their gold to the sound of poetry or music.”

As he was talking his eye caught one of the inscriptions that foretold perpetuity to the power and glory of the Moslem monarchs, the masters of the pile. He shook his head and shrugged his shoulders as he interpreted it. “Such might have been the case,” said he; “the Moslems might still have been reigning in the Alhambra had not Boabdil been a traitor, and given up his capitol to the Christians. The Spanish monarchs would never have been able to conquer it by open force.”

I endeavored to vindicate the memory of the unlucky Boabdil from this aspersion, and to show that the dissensions which led to the downfall of the Moorish throne originated in the cruelty of his tiger-hearted father; but the Moor would admit of no palliation.

“Abul Hassan,” said he, “might have been cruel, but he was brave, vigilant, and patriotic. Had he been properly seconded Granada would still have been ours; but his son Boabdil thwarted his plans, crippled his power, sowed treason in his palace and dissension in his camp. May the curse of God light upon him for his treachery.” With these words the Moor left the Alhambra.

The indignation of my turbaned companion agrees with an anecdote related by a friend, who, in the course of a tour in Barbary, had an interview with the pasha of Tetuan. The Moorish governor was particular in his

inquiries about the soil, the climate and resources of Spain, and especially concerning the favored regions of Andalusia, the delights of Granada and the remains of its royal palace. The replies awakened all those fond recollections, so deeply cherished by the Moors, of the power and splendor of their ancient empire in Spain. Turning to his Moslem attendants, the pasha stroked his beard, and broke forth in passionate lamentations that such a scepter should have fallen from the sway of true believers. He consoled himself, however, with the persuasion that the power and prosperity of the Spanish nation were on the decline; that a time would come when the Moors would reconquer their rightful domains; and that the day was, perhaps, not far distant, when Mohammedan worship would again be offered up in the mosque of Cordova, and a Mohammedan prince sit on his throne in the Alhambra.

Such is the general aspiration and belief among the Moors of Barbary, who consider Spain, and especially Andalusia, their rightful heritage, of which they have been despoiled by treachery and violence. These ideas are fostered and perpetuated by the descendants of the exiled Moors of Granada, scattered among the cities of Barbary. Several of these reside in Tetuan, preserving their ancient names, such as Paez, and Medina, and refraining from intermarriage with any families who cannot claim the same high origin. Their vaunted lineage is regarded with a degree of popular deference rarely shown in Mohammedan communities to any hereditary distinction except in the royal line.

These families, it is said, continue to sigh after the terrestrial paradise of their ancestors, and to put up prayers in their mosques on Fridays, imploring Allah to hasten the time when Granada shall be restored to the faithful—an event to which they look forward as fondly and confidently as did the Christian crusaders to the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher. Nay, it is added that some of them retain the ancient maps and deeds of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada, and even the keys of the houses, holding them as evidences of their hereditary claims, to be produced at the anticipated day of restoration.

BOABDIL EL CHICO.

MY conversation with the Moor in the Court of Lions set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil. Never was surname more applicable than that bestowed upon him by his subjects of "El Zogoybi," or "the unlucky." His misfortunes began almost in his cradle. In his tender youth he was imprisoned and menaced with death by an inhuman father, and only escaped through a mother's stratagem; in after years his life was embittered and repeatedly endangered by the hostilities of a usurping uncle; his reign was distracted by external invasions and internal feuds; he was alternately the foe, the prisoner, the friend, and always the dupe of Ferdinand, until conquered and dethroned by the mingled craft and force of that perfidious monarch. An exile from his native land, he took refuge with one of the princes of Africa, and fell obscurely in battle fighting in the cause of a stranger. His misfortunes ceased not with his death. If Boabdil cherished a desire to leave an honorable name on the historic page, how cruelly has he been defrauded of his hopes! Who is there that has turned the least attention to the romantic history of the Moorish domination in Spain, without kindling with indignation at the alleged atrocities of Boabdil? Who has not been touched with the woes of his lovely and gentle queen, subjected by him to a trial of life and death, on a false charge of infidelity? Who has not been shocked by the alleged murder of his sister and her two children in a transport of passion? Who has not felt his blood boil at the inhuman massacre of the gallant Abencerrages, thirty-six of whom, it is affirmed, he caused to be beheaded in the Court of the Lions? All these charges have been reiterated in various forms; they have passed into ballads, dramas, and romances, until they have taken too thorough possession of the public mind to be eradicated.

There is not a foreigner of education that visits the Alhambra but asks for the fountain where the Abencerrages were beheaded, and gazes with horror at the grated gallery where the queen is said to have been confined; not a peasant of the Vega or the Sierra but sings the story in rude couplets to the accompaniment of his

guitar, while his hearers learn to execrate the very name of Boabdil.

Never, however, was name more foully and unjustly slandered. I have examined all the authentic chronicles and letters written by Spanish authors contemporary with Boabdil, some of whom were in the confidence of the Catholic sovereigns, and actually present in the camp throughout the war; I have examined all the Arabian authorities I could get access to through the medium of translation, and can find nothing to justify these dark and hateful accusations.

The whole of these tales may be traced to a work commonly called "The Civil Wars of Granada," containing a pretended history of the feuds of the Zegries and Abencerages during the last struggle of the Moorish empire. This work appeared originally in Spanish, and professed to be translated from the Arabic by one Gines Perez de Hita, an inhabitant of Murcia. It has since passed into various languages, and Florian has taken from it much of the fable of his Gonsalvo of Cordova. It has, in a great measure, usurped the authority of real history, and is currently believed by the people, and especially the peasantry of Granada. The whole of it, however, is a mass of fiction, mingled with a few disfigured truths, which give it an air of veracity. It bears internal evidence of its falsity, the manners and customs of the Moors being extravagantly misrepresented in it, and scenes depicted totally incompatible with their habits and their faith, and which never could have been recorded by a Mohammedan writer.

I confess there seems to me something almost criminal in the willful perversions of this work. Great latitude is undoubtedly to be allowed to romantic fiction, but there are limits which it must not pass, and the names of the distinguished dead, which belong to history, are no more to be calumniated than those of the illustrious living. One would have thought, too, that the unfortunate Boabdil had suffered enough for his justifiable hostility to Spaniards, by being striped of his kingdom, without having his name thus wantonly traduced and rendered a byword and a theme of infamy in his native land, and in the very mansion of his fathers!

It is not intended hereby to affirm that the transac-

tions imputed to Boabdil are totally without historic foundation, but as far as they can be traced they appear to have been the arts of his father, Abul Hassan, who is represented by both Christian and Arabian chroniclers as being of a cruel and ferocious nature. It was he who put to death the cavaliers of the illustrious line of the Abencerrages, upon suspicion of their being engaged in a conspiracy to dispossess him of his throne.

The story of the accusation of the queen of Boabdil, and of her confinement in one of the towers, may also be traced to an incident in the life of his tiger-hearted father. Abul Hassan, in his advanced age, married a beautiful Christian captive of noble descent, who took the Moorish appellation of Zorayda, by whom he had two sons. She was of an ambitious spirit, and anxious that her children should succeed to the crown. For this purpose she worked upon the suspicious temper of the king, inflaming him with jealousies of his children by his other wives and concubines, whom she accused of plotting against his throne and life. Some of them were slain by the ferocious father. Ayxa la Horra, the virtuous mother of Boabdil, who had once been his cherished favorite, became likewise the object of his suspicion. He confined her and her son in the tower of Comares, and would have sacrificed Boabdil to his fury but that his tender mother lowered him from the tower, in the night, by means of the scarfs of herself and her attendants, and thus enabled him to escape to Guadix.

Such is the only shadow of a foundation that I can find for the story of the accused and captive queen; and in this it appears that Boabdil was the persecuted instead of the persecutor.

Throughout the whole of his brief, turbulent, and disastrous reign Boabdil gives evidences of a mild and amiable character. He in the first instance won the hearts of the people by his affable and gracious manners; he was always peaceable, and never inflicted any severity of punishment upon those who occasionally rebelled against him. He was personally brave, but he wanted moral courage, and in times of difficulty and perplexity was wavering and irresolute. This feebleness of spirit hastened his downfall, while it deprived him of that heroic grace which would have given a grandeur and

dignity to his fate, and rendered him worthy of closing the splendid drama of the Moslem domination in Spain.

MEMENTOS OF BOABDIL.

WHILE my mind was still warm with the subject of the unfortunate Boabdil, I set forth to trace the mementos connected with his story, which yet exist in this scene of his sovereignty and his misfortunes. In the picture gallery of the Palace of the Generaliffe hangs his portrait. The face is mild, handsome and somewhat melancholy, with a fair complexion and yellow hair; if it be a true representation of the man, he may have been wavering and uncertain, but there is nothing of cruelty or unkindness in his aspect.

I next visited the dungeon wherein he was confined in his youthful days, when his cruel father meditated his destruction. It is a vaulted room in the tower of Comares, under the hall of Ambassadors. A similar room, separated by a narrow passage, was the prison of his mother, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra. The walls are of prodigious thickness, and the small windows secured by iron bars. A narrow stone gallery, with a low parapet, extends round three sides of the tower just below the windows, but at a considerable height from the ground. From this gallery, it is presumed, the queen lowered her son with the scarfs of herself and her female attendants, during the darkness of night, to the hillside, at the foot of which waited a domestic with a fleet steed to bear the prince to the mountains.

As I paced this gallery my imagination pictured the anxious queen leaning over the parapet, and listening, with the throbbings of a mother's heart, to the last echo of the horse's hoofs as her son scoured along the narrow valley of the Darro.

My next search was for the gate by which Boabdil departed from the Alhambra, when about to surrender his capital. With the melancholy caprice of a broken spirit, he requested of the Catholic monarchs that no one afterward might be permitted to pass through this gate. His prayer, according to ancient chronicles, was com-

plied with, through the sympathy of Isabella, and the gate walled up. For some time I inquired in vain for such a portal; at length my humble attendant, Mateo, learned among the old residents of the fortress that a ruinous gateway still existed, by which, according to tradition, the Moorish king had left the fortress, but which had never been opened within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

He conducted me to the spot. The gateway is in the center of what was once an immense tower, called *la Torre de los Siete Suelos*, or the Tower of the Seven Moors. It is a place famous in the superstitious stories of the neighborhood for being the scene of strange apparitions and Moorish enchantments.

This once redoubtable tower is now a mere wreck, having been blown up with gunpowder by the French when they abandoned the fortress. Great masses of the wall lie scattered about, buried in the luxuriant herbage or overshadowed by vines and fig-trees. The arch of the gateway, though rent by the shock, still remains; but the last wish of poor Boabdil has been again, though unintentionally, fulfilled, for the portal has been closed up by loose stones gathered from the ruins, and remains impassable.

Following up the route of the Moslem monarch as it remains on record, I crossed on horseback the hill of Les Martyrs, keeping along the garden of the convent of the same name, and thence down a rugged ravine, beset by thickets of aloes and Indian figs, and lined by caves and hovels swarming with gypsies. It was the road taken by Boabdil to avoid passing through the city. The descent was so steep and broken that I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse.

Emerging from the ravine and passing by the *Puerta de los Molinos* (the Gate of the Mills), I issued forth upon the public promenade, called the Prado, and pursuing the course of the Xenil, arrived at a small Moorish mosque, now converted into the chapel, or hermitage, of San Sebastian. A tablet on the wall relates that on this spot Boabdil surrendered the keys of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns.

From thence I rode slowly across the Vega to a village where the family and household of the unhappy king had

awaited him; for he had sent them forward on the preceding night from the Alhambra, that his mother and wife might not participate in his personal humiliation, or be exposed to the gaze of the conquerors.

Following on in the route of the melancholy band of royal exiles, I arrived at the foot of a chain of barren and dreary heights, forming the skirt of the Alpuxarra mountains. From the summit of one of these the unfortunate Boabdil took his last look at Granada. It bears a name expressive of his sorrows—La Cuesta de las Lagrimas (the Hill of Tears). Beyond it a sandy road winds across a rugged, cheerless waste, doubly dismal to the unhappy monarch, as it led to exile; behind, in the distance, lies the “enameled Vega,” with the Xenil shining among its bowers, and Granada beyond.

I spurred my horse to the summit of a rock, where Boabdil uttered his last sorrowful exclamation as he turned his eyes from taking their farewell gaze. It is still denominated *el ultimo suspiro del Moro* (the last sigh of the Moor). Who can wonder at his anguish at being expelled from such a kingdom and such an abode? With the Alhambra he seemed to be yielding up all the honors of his line, and all the glories and delights of life.

It was here, too, that his affliction was imbittered by the reproach of his mother Ayxa, who had so often assisted him in times of peril, and had vainly sought to instill into him her own resolute spirit. “You do well,” said she, “to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man!” A speech that savors more of the pride of the princess than the tenderness of the mother.

When this anecdote was related to Charles V. by Bishop Guevara, the emperor joined in the expression of scorn at the weakness of the wavering Boabdil. “Had I been he, or he been I,” said the haughty potentate, “I would rather have made this Alhambra my sepulcher than have lived without a kingdom in the Alpuxarra.”

How easy it is for them in power and prosperity to preach heroism to the vanquished! How little can they understand that life itself may rise in value with the unfortunate, when naught but life remains.

THE TOWER OF LAS INFANTAS.

IN an evening's stroll up a narrow glen overshadowed by fig-trees, pomegranates, and myrtles, that divides the land of the fortress from those of the Generaliffe, I was struck with the romantic appearance of a Moorish tower in the outer wall of the Alhambra, that rose high above the tree-tops, and caught the ruddy rays of the setting sun. A solitary window, at a great height, commanded a view of the glen, and as I was regarding it a young female looked out, with her head adorned with flowers. She was evidently superior to the usual class of people that inhabit the old towers of the fortress; and this sudden and picturesque glimpse of her reminded me of the descriptions of captive beauties in fairy tales. The fanciful associations of my mind were increased on being informed by my attendant, Mateo, that this was the tower of the Princesses (*la Torre de las Infantas*), so called from having been, according to tradition, the residence of the daughters of the Moorish kings. I have since visited the tower. It is not generally shown to strangers, though well worthy attention, for the interior is equal for beauty of architecture and delicacy of ornament to any part of the palace. The elegance of its central hall with its marble fountain, its lofty arches and richly fretted dome; the arabesques and stucco work of the small but well proportioned chambers, though injured by time and neglect, all accord with the story of its being anciently the abode of royal beauty.

The little old fairy queen who lives under the staircase of the Alhambra, and frequents the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, tells some fanciful traditions about three Moorish princesses who were once shut up in this tower by their father, a tyrant king of Granada, and were only permitted to ride out at night about the hills, when no one was permitted to come in their way, under pain of death. They still, according to her account, may be seen occasionally when the moon is in the full, riding in lonely places along the mountain side, on palfreys richly caparisoned, and sparkling with jewels, but they vanish on being spoken to.

But before I relate anything further respecting these

princesses the reader may be anxious to know something about the fair inhabitant of the tower with her head dressed with flowers, who looked out from the lofty window. She proved to be the newly married spouse of the worthy adjutant of invalids; who, though well stricken in years, had had the courage to take to his bosom a young and buxom Andalusian damsel. May the good old cavalier be happy in his choice, and find the tower of the Princesses a more secure residence for female beauty than it seems to have proved in the time of the Moslems, if we may believe the following legend.

THE HOUSE OF THE WEATHERCOCK.

ON the brow of the lofty hill of the Albaycin, the highest part of the city of Granada, stand the remains of what was once a royal palace, founded shortly after the conquest of Spain by the Arabs. It is now converted into a manufactory, and has fallen into such obscurity that it cost me much trouble to find it, notwithstanding that I had the assistance of the sagacious and all-knowing Mateo Ximenes. This edifice still bears the name by which it has been known for centuries, namely, la Casa del Gallo de Viento; that is, the House of the Weathercock.

It was so called from a bronze figure of a warrior on horseback, armed with shield and spear, erected on one of its turrets, and turning with every wind; bearing an Arabic motto, which, translated into Spanish, was as follows:

Dici el Sabio Aben Habuz
Que asi se defiende el Anduluz.

In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
The Andalusian his foe defies.

This Aben Habuz was a captain who served in the invading army of Taric, and was left as alcaide of Granada. He is supposed to have intended this warlike effigy as a perpetual memorial to the Moorish inhabitants that surrounded as they were by foes, and subject to sudden

invasion, their safety depended upon being always ready for the field.

Other traditions, however, give a different account of this Aben Habuz and his palace, and affirm that his bronze horseman was originally a talisman of great virtue, though in after ages it lost its magic properties and degenerated into a weathercock. The following are the traditions alluded to.

THE LEGEND OF THE ARABIAN ASTROLOGER.

IN old times, many hundred years ago, there was a Moorish king named Aben Habuz, who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. He was a retired conqueror, that is to say, one who, having in his more youthful days led a life of constant foray and depredation, now that he was grown old and superannuated, "languished for repose," and desired nothing more than to live at peace with all the world, to husband his laurels and to enjoy in quiet the possessions he had wrested from his neighbors.

It so happened, however, that this most reasonable and pacific old monarch had young rivals to deal with—princes full of his early passion for fame and fighting, and who had some scores to settle which he had run up with their fathers; he had also some turbulent and discontented districts of his own territories among the Alpuxarra Mountains, which, during the days of his vigor, he had treated with a high hand; and which, now that he languished for repose, were prone to rise in rebellion and to threaten to march to Granada and drive him from his throne. To make the matter worse, as Granada is surrounded by wild and craggy mountains which hide the approach of an enemy, the unfortunate Aben Habuz was kept in a constant state of vigilance and alarm, not knowing in what quarter hostilities might break out.

It was in vain that he built watch-towers on the mountains and stationed guards at every pass, with orders to make fires by night, and smoke by day, on the approach of an enemy. His alert foes would baffle every precaution, and come breaking out of some unthought-of defile

—ravage his lands beneath his very nose, and then make off with prisoners and booty to the mountains. Was ever peaceable and retired conqueror in a more uncomfortable predicament!

While the pacific Aben Habuz was harassed by these perplexities and molestations, an ancient Arabian physician arrived at his court. His gray beard descended to his girdle, and he had every mark of extreme age, yet he had traveled almost the whole way from Egypt on foot, with no other aid than a staff marked with hieroglyphics. His fame had preceded him. His name was Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub; he was said to have lived ever since the days of Mohammed, and to be the son of Abu Ayub, the last of the companions of the prophet. He had, when a child, followed the conquering army of Amru into Egypt, where he had remained many years studying the dark sciences, and particularly magic, among the Egyptian priests. It was moreover said that he had found out the secret of prolonging life, by means of which he had arrived to the great age of upward of two centuries; though, as he did not discover the secret until well stricken in years, he could only perpetuate his gray hairs and wrinkles.

This wonderful old man was very honorably entertained by the king, who, like most superannuated monarchs, began to take physicians into great favor. He would have assigned him an apartment in his palace, but the astrologer preferred a cave in the side of the hill, which rises above the city of Granada, being the same on which the Alhambra has since been built. He caused the cave to be enlarged so as to form a spacious and lofty hall with a circular hole at the top, through which, as through a well, he could see the heavens and behold the stars even at midday. The walls of this hall were covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics, with cabalistic symbols, and with the figures of the stars in their signs. This hall he furnished with many implements, fabricated under his direction by cunning artificers of Granada, but the occult properties of which were only known to himself. In a little while the sage Ibrahim became the bosom counselor of the king, to whom he applied for advice in every emergency.

Aben Habuz was once inveighing against the injustice

of his neighbors, and bewailing the restless vigilance he had to observe to guard himself against their invasions; when he had finished the astrologer remained silent for a moment, and then replied, "Know, O king, that when I was in Egypt I beheld a great marvel devised by a pagan priestess of old. On a mountain above the city of Borsa, and overlooking the great valley of the Nile, was a figure of a ram, and above it a figure of a cock, both of molten brass and turning upon a pivot. Whenever the country was threatened with invasion the ram would turn in the direction of the enemy and the cock would crow; upon this the inhabitants of the city knew of the danger and of the quarter from which it was approaching, and could take timely notice to guard against it."

"God is great!" exclaimed the pacific Aben Habuz; "what a treasure would be such a ram to keep an eye upon these mountains around me and then such a cock to crow in time of danger! Allah Achbar! how securely I might sleep in my palace with such sentinels on the top!"

"Listen, O king," continued the astrologer gravely. "When the victorious Amru (God's peace be upon him!) conquered the city of Borsa this talisman was destroyed; but I was present and examined it and studied its secret and mystery, and can make one of like and even of greater virtues."

"O wise son of Abu Ayub," cried Aben Habuz, "better were such a talisman than all the watch-towers on the hills, and sentinels upon the borders. Give me such a safeguard, and the riches of my treasury are at thy command."

The astrologer immediately set to work to gratify the wishes of the monarch; shutting himself up in his astrological hall and exerting the necromantic arts he had learned in Egypt, he summoned to his assistance the spirits and demons of the Nile. By his command they transported to his presence a mummy from a sepulchral chamber in the center of one of the Pyramids. It was the mummy of the priest who had aided by magic art in rearing that stupendous pile.

The astrologer opened the outer cases of the mummy, and unfolded its many wrappers. On the breast of the corpse was a book written in Chaldaic characters. He seized it with trembling hand, then returning the

mummy to its case, ordered the demons to transport it again to its dark and silent sepulcher in the Pyramid, there to await the final day of resurrection and judgment.

This book, says the traditions, was the book of knowledge given by God to Adam after his fall. It had been handed down from generation to generation, to King Solomon the Wise, and by the aid of the wonderful secrets in magic and art revealed in it, he had built the temple of Jerusalem. How it had come into the possession of the builder of the Pyramids, He only knows who knows all things.

Instructed by this mystic volume and aided by the genii which it subjected to his command, the astrologer soon erected a great tower upon the top of the palace of Aben Habuz, which stood on the brow of the hill of the Albaycin. The tower was built of stones brought from Egypt, and taken, it is said, from one of the Pyramids. In the upper part of the tower was a circular hall, with windows looking toward every point of the compass, and before each window was a table, on which was arranged, as on a chess-board, a mimic army of horse and foot, with the effigy of the potentate that ruled in that direction, all carved of wood. To each of these tables there was a small lance, no bigger than a bodkin, on which were engraved certain mysterious Chaldaic characters. This hall was kept constantly closed by a gate of brass with a great lock of steel, the key of which was in possession of the king.

On the top of the tower was a bronze figure of a Moorish horseman, fixed on a pivot, with a shield on one arm, and his lance elevated perpendicularly. The face of this horseman was toward the city, as if keeping guard over it; but if any foe were at hand the figure would turn in that direction and would level the lance as if for action.

When this talisman was finished Aben Habuz was all impatient to try its virtues; and longed as ardently for an invasion as he had ever sighed after repose. His desire was soon gratified. Tidings were brought early one morning, by the sentinel appointed to watch the tower, that the face of the brazen horseman was turned toward the mountains of Elvira, and that his lance pointed directly against the pass of Lopè.

“Let the drums and trumpets sound to arms, and all Granada be put on the alert,” said Aben Habuz.

“O king,” said the astrologer, “let not your city be disquieted, nor your warriors called to arms; we need no aid of force to deliver you from your enemies. Dismiss your attendants and let us proceed alone to the secret hall of the tower.”

The ancient Aben Habuz mounted the staircase of the tower, leaning on the arm of the still more ancient Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub. They unlocked the brazen door and entered. The window that looked toward the pass of Lopè was open. “In this direction,” said the astrologer, “lies the danger—approach, O king, and behold the mystery of the table.”

King Aben Habuz approached the seeming chess-board, on which were arranged the small wooden effigies; when lo! they were all in motion. The horses pranced and curveted, the warriors brandished their weapons, and there was a faint sound of drums and trumpets, and a clang of arms and neighing of steeds, but all no louder nor more distinct than the hum of the bee or summer-fly in the drowsy ear of him who lies at noontide in the shade.

“Behold, O king,” said the astrologer, “a proof that thy enemies are even now in the field. They must be advancing through yonder mountains by the pass of Lopè. Would you produce a panic and confusion among them, and cause them to abandon their enterprise and retreat without loss of life, strike these effigies with the butt end of this magic lance; but would you cause bloody feud and carnage among them, strike with the point.”

A livid streak passed across the countenance of the pacific Aben Habuz; he seized the mimic lance with trembling eagerness, and tottered toward the table; his gray beard wagged with chuckling exultation. “Son of Abu Ayub,” exclaimed he, “I think we will have a little blood!”

So saying he thrust the magic lance into some of the pygmy effigies, and belabored others with the butt end; upon which the former fell, as dead, upon the board, and the rest, turning upon each other, began, pell-mell, a chance-medley fight.

It was with difficulty the astrologer could stay the hand of the most pacific of monarchs, and prevent him from absolutely exterminating his foes. At length he

prevailed upon him to leave the tower, and to send out scouts to the mountains by the pass of Lopè.

They returned with the intelligence that a Christian army had advanced through the heart of the Sierra, almost within sight of Granada, when a dissension having broken out among them, they had turned their weapons against each other, and after much slaughter, had retreated over the border.

Aben Habuz was transported with joy on thus proving the efficacy of the talisman. "At length," said he, "I shall lead a life of tranquillity, and have all my enemies in my power. Oh! wise son of Abu Ayub, what can I bestow on thee in reward for such a blessing?"

"The wants of an old man and a philosopher, O king, are few and simple—grant me but the means of fitting up my cave as a suitable hermitage, and I am content."

"How noble is the moderation of the truly wise!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, secretly pleased at the cheapness of the recompense. He summoned his treasurer, and bade him dispense whatever sums might be required by Ibrahim to complete and furnish his hermitage.

The astrologer now gave orders to have various chambers hewn out of the solid rock, so as to form ranges of apartments connected with his astrological hall. These he caused to be furnished with luxurious ottomans and divans; and the walls to be hung with the richest silks of Damascus. "I am an old man," said he, "and can no longer rest my bones on stone couches; and these damp walls require covering."

He also had baths constructed and provided with all kinds of perfumery and aromatic oils; "for a bath," said he, "is necessary to counteract the rigidity of age, and to restore freshness and suppleness to the frame withered by study."

He caused the apartments to be hung with innumerable silver and crystal lamps, which he filled with a fragrant oil prepared according to a recipe discovered by him in the tombs of Egypt. This oil was perpetual in its nature, and diffused a soft radiance like the tempered light of day. "The light of the sun," said he, "is too garish and violent for the eyes of an old man; and the light of the lamp is more congenial to the studies of a philosopher."

The treasurer of King Aben Habuz groaned at the sums daily demanded to fit up this hermitage, and he carried his complaints to the king. The royal word, however, was given—Aben Habuz shrugged his shoulders. “We must have patience,” said he; “this old man has taken his idea of a philosophic retreat from the interior of the Pyramids and the vast ruins of Egypt; but all things have an end, and so will the furnishing of his cavern.”

The king was in the right; the hermitage was at length complete, and formed a sumptuous subterranean palace. “I am now content,” said Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub, to the treasurer; “I will shut myself up in my cell and devote my time to study. I desire nothing more—nothing—except a trifling solace to amuse me at the intervals of mental labor.”

“Oh! wise Ibrahim, ask what thou wilt; I am bound to furnish all that is necessary for thy solitude.”

“I would fain have, then, a few dancing women,” said the philosopher.

“Dancing women!” echoed the treasurer with surprise.

“Dancing women,” replied the sage gravely: “a few will suffice; for I am an old man and a philosopher, of simple habits and easily satisfied. Let them, however, be young and fair to look upon—for the sight of youth and beauty is refreshing to old age.”

While the philosophic Ibrahim Ebn Ayub passed his time thus sagely in his hermitage, the pacific Aben Habuz carried on furious campaigns in effigy in his tower. It was a glorious thing for an old man like himself, of quiet habits, to have war made easy, and to be enabled to amuse himself in his chamber by brushing away whole armies like so many swarms of flies. For a time he rioted in the indulgence of his humors, and even taunted and insulted his neighbors to induce them to make incursions; but by degrees they grew wary from repeated disasters until no one ventured to invade his territories. For many months the bronze horseman remained on the peace establishment with his lance elevated in the air, and the worthy old monarch began to repine at the want of his accustomed sport, and to grow peevish at his monotonous tranquillity.

At length, one day, the talismanic horseman veered suddenly round, and, lowering his lance, made a dead point toward the mountains of Guadix. Aben Habuz hastened to his tower, but the magic table in that direction remained quiet—not a single warrior was in motion. Perplexed at the circumstance, he sent forth a troop of horse to scour the mountains and reconnoiter. They returned after three days' absence. Rodovan, the captain of the troop, addressed the king: "We have searched every mountain pass," said he, "but not a helm or spear was stirring. All that we found in the course of our foray was a Christian damsel of surpassing beauty, sleeping at noontide beside a fountain, whom we have brought away captive."

"A damsel of surpassing beauty!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, his eyes gleaming with animation: "let her be conducted into my presence." "Pardon me, O king!" replied Rodovan, "but our warfare at present is scanty, and yields but little harvest. I had hoped this chance gleaning would have been allowed for my services."

"Chance gleaning!" cried Aben Habuz. "What! a damsel of surpassing beauty! By the head of my father! it is the choice fruits of warfare, only to be garnered up into the royal keeping. Let the damsel be brought hither instantly."

The beautiful damsel was accordingly conducted into his presence. She was arrayed in the Gothic style, with all the luxury of ornament that had prevailed among the Gothic Spaniards at the time of the Arabian conquest. Pearls of dazzling whiteness were entwined with her raven tresses, and jewels sparkled on her forehead, rivaling the luster of her eyes. Around her neck was a golden chain, to which was suspended a silver lyre which hung by her side.

The flashes of her dark refulgent eye were like sparks of fire on the withered, yet combustible breast of Aben Habuz, and set it in a flame. The swimming voluptuousness of her gait made his senses reel. "Fairest of women," cried he, with rapture, "who and what art thou?"

"The daughter of one of the Gothic princes who lately ruled over this land. The armies of my father have been destroyed as if by magic among these mountains, he has been driven into exile, and his daughter is a slave."

“Be comforted, beautiful princess—thou art no longer a slave, but a sovereign; turn thine eyes graciously upon Aben Habuz, and reign over him and his dominions.”

“Beware, O king,” whispered Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub; “this may be some spirit conjured up by the magicians of the Goths, and sent for thy undoing. Or it may be one of those northern sorceresses, who assume the most seducing forms to beguile the unwary. Methinks I read witchcraft in her eye, and sorcery in every movement. Let my sovereign beware—this must be the enemy pointed out by the talisman.” “Son of Abu Ayub,” replied the king, “you are a wise man and a conjuror, I grant—but you are little versed in the ways of woman. In the knowledge of the sex, I will yield to no man; no, not to the wise Solomon himself, notwithstanding the number of his wives and his concubines. As to this damsel, I see much comfort in her for my old days, even such comfort as David, the father of Solomon, found in the society of Abishag the Shunamite.”

“Hearken, O king,” rejoined the astrologer, suddenly changing his tone—“I have given thee many triumphs over thy enemies, and by means of my talisman, yet thou hast never given me share of the spoils; grant me this one stray captive to solace me in my retirement, and I am content.”

“What!” cried Aben Habuz, “more women! hast thou not already dancing women to solace thee—what more wouldst thou desire?”

“Dancing women have I, it is true; but I have none that sing; and music is a balm to old age. This captive, I perceive, beareth a silver lyre, and must be skilled in minstrelsy. Give her to me, I pray thee, to soothe my senses after the toil of study.”

The ire of the pacific monarch was kindled, and he loaded the philosopher with reproaches. The latter retired indignantly to his hermitage, but ere he departed he again warned the monarch to beware of his beautiful captive. Where, in fact, is the old man in love that will listen to counsel? Aben Habuz had felt the full power of the witchery of the eye, and the sorcery of movement, and the more he gazed the more he was enamored.

He resigned himself to the full sway of his passions. His only study was how to render himself amiable in the

eyes of the Gothic beauty. He had not youth, it is true, to recommend him, but then he had riches; and when a lover is no longer young he becomes generous. The Zacatin of Granada was ransacked for the most precious merchandise of the East. Silks, jewels, precious gems and exquisite perfumes, all that Asia and Africa yielded of rich and rare, were lavished upon the princess. She received all as her due, and regarded them with the indifference of one accustomed to magnificence. All kinds of spectacles and festivities were devised for her entertainment—minstrelsy, dancing, tournaments, bull-fights. Granada, for a time, was a scene of perpetual pageant. The Gothic princess seemed to take a delight in causing expense, as if she sought to drain the treasures of the monarch. There were no bounds to her caprice, or to the extravagance of her ideas. Yet, notwithstanding all this munificence, the venerable Aben Habuz could not flatter himself that he had made any impression on her heart. She never frowned on him, it is true, but she had a singular way of baffling his tender advances. Whenever he began to plead his passion she struck her silver lyre. There was a mystic charm in the sound: on hearing of it, an irresistible drowsiness seized upon the superannuated lover, he fell asleep, and only woke when the temporary fumes of passion had evaporated. Still the dream of love had a bewitching power over his senses; so he continued to dream on; while all Granada scoffed at his infatuation, and groaned at the treasures lavished for a song.

At length a danger burst over the head of Aben Habuz, against which his talisman yielded him no warning. A rebellion broke out in the very heart of his capital, headed by the bold Rodovan. Aben Habuz was, for a time, besieged in his palace, and it was not without the greatest difficulty that he repelled his assailants and quelled the insurrection.

He now felt himself compelled once more to resort to the assistance of the astrologer. He found him still shut up in his hermitage, chewing the cud of resentment. "O wise son of Abu Ayub," said he, "what thou hast foretold, has, in some sort, come to pass. This Gothic princess has brought trouble and danger upon me."

"Is the king then disposed to put her away from him?" said the astrologer with animation.

“Sooner would I part with my kingdom!” replied Aben Habuz.

“What then is the need of disturbing me in my philosophical retirement?” said the astrologer peevishly.

“Be not angry, O sagest of philosophers. I would fain have one more exertion of thy magic art. Devise some means by which I may be secure from internal treason as well as outward war—some safe retreat, where I may take refuge and be at peace.”

The astrologer ruminated for a moment, and a subtle gleam shone from his eye under his bushy eyebrows.

“Thou hast heard, no doubt, O king,” said he, “of the palace and garden of Irem, whereof mention is made in that chapter of the Koran entitled ‘the dawn of day.’”

“I have heard of that garden—marvelous things are related of it by the pilgrims who visit Mecca, but I have thought them wild fables, such as those are prone to tell who visit remote regions.”

“Listen, O king, and thou shalt know the mystery of that garden. In my younger days I was in Arabia the Happy, tending my father’s camels. One of them strayed away from the rest, and was lost. I searched for it for several days about the deserts of Aden, until wearied and faint, I laid myself down and slept under a palm-tree by the side of a scanty well. When I awoke I found myself at the gate of a city. I entered and beheld noble streets and squares and market places, but all were silent and without an inhabitant. I wandered on until I came to a sumptuous palace, with a garden adorned with fountains and fish-ponds; and groves and flowers; and orchards laden with delicious fruit; but still no one was to be seen. Upon which, appalled at this loneliness, I hastened to depart, and, after issuing forth at the gate of the city, I turned to look upon the place, but it was no longer to be seen—nothing but the silent desert extended before my eyes.

“In the neighborhood I met with an aged dervise, learned in the traditions and secrets of the land, and related to him what had befallen me. ‘This,’ said he, ‘is the far-famed garden of Irem, one of the wonders of the desert. It only appears at times to some wanderer like thyself, gladdening him with the sight of towers and palaces, and garden walls overhung with richly laden

fruit-trees, and then vanishes, leaving nothing but a lonely desert. And this is the story of it: In old times, when this country was inhabited by the Addiles, King Sheddad, the son of Ad, the great-grandson of Noah, founded here a splendid city. When it was finished, and he saw its grandeur, his heart was puffed up with pride and arrogance, and he determined to build a royal palace, with gardens that should rival all that was related in the Koran of the celestial paradise. But the curse of Heaven fell upon him for his presumption. He and his subjects were swept from the earth, and his splendid city, and palace, and garden, were laid under a perpetual spell that hides them from the human sight, excepting that they are seen at intervals; by way of keeping his sin in perpetual remembrance.'

"This story, O king, and the wonders I had seen, ever dwell in my mind, and, in after years, when I had been in Egypt and made myself master of all kinds of magic spells, I determined to return and visit the garden of Irem. I did so, and found it revealed to my instructed sight. I took possession of the palace of Sheddad, and passed several days in his mock paradise. The genii who watch over the place were obedient to my magic power, and revealed to me the spells by which the whole garden had been, as it were, conjured into existence, and by which it was rendered invisible. Such spells, O king, are within the scope of my art. What sayest thou? Wouldst thou have a palace and garden like those of Irem, filled with all manner of delights, but hidden from the eyes of mortals?"

"O wise son of Abu Ayub," exclaimed Aben Habuz, trembling with eagerness—"contrive me such a paradise, and ask any reward, even to half of my kingdom."

"Alas," replied the other, "thou knowest I am an old man, and a philosopher, and easily satisfied; all the reward I ask, is the first beast of burden, with its load, that shall enter the magic portal of the palace."

The monarch gladly agreed to so moderate a stipulation, and the astrologer began his work. On the summit of the hill immediately above his subterranean hermitage he caused a great gateway or barbican to be erected, opening through the center of a strong tower. There

was an outer vestibule or porch with a lofty arch, and within it a portal secured by massive gates. On the keystone of the portal the astrologer, with his own hand, wrought the figure of a huge key, and on the keystone of the outer arch of the vestibule, which was loftier than that of the portal, he carved a gigantic hand. These were potent talismans, over which he repeated many sentences in an unknown tongue.

When this gateway was finished he shut himself up for two days in his astrological hall, engaged in secret incantations; on the third he ascended the hill, and passed the whole day on its summit. At a late hour of the night he came down and presented himself before Aben Habuz. "At length, O king," said he, "my labor is accomplished. On the summit of the hill stands one of the most delectable palaces that ever the head of man devised, or the heart of man desired. It contains sumptuous halls and galleries, delicious gardens, cool fountains and fragrant baths; in a word, the whole mountain is converted into a paradise. Like the garden of Irem, it is protected by a mighty charm, which hides it from the view and search of mortals, excepting such as possess the secret of its talismans."

"Enough," cried Aben Habuz joyfully; "to-morrow morning, bright and early, we will ascend and take possession." The happy monarch scarcely slept that night. Scarcely had the rays of the sun begun to play about the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada when he mounted his steed, and accompanied only by a few chosen attendants, ascended a steep and narrow road leading up the hill. Beside him, on a white palfrey, rode the Gothic princess, her dress sparkling with jewels, while round her neck was suspended her silver lyre. The astrologer walked on the other side of the king, assisting his steps with his hieroglyphic staff, for he never mounted steed of any kind.

Aben Habuz looked to see the towers of the promised palace brightening above him, and the embowered terraces of its gardens stretching along the heights, but as yet nothing of the kind was to be descried. "That is the mystery and safeguard of the place," said the astrologer, "nothing can be discerned until you have passed the spell-bound gateway, and been put in possession of the place."

As they approached the gateway the astrologer paused, and pointed out to the king the mystic hand and key carved upon the portal and the arch. "These," said he, "are the talismans which guard the entrance to this paradise. Until yonder hand shall reach down and seize that key, neither mortal power nor magic artifice can prevail against the lord of this mountain."

While Aben Habuz was gazing with open mouth and silent wonder at these mystic talismans, the palfrey of the princess proceeded on, and bore her in at the portal, to the very center of the barbican.

"Behold," cried the astrologer, "my promised reward! the first animal with its burden that should enter the magic gateway."

Aben Habuz smiled at what he considered a pleasantry of the ancient man; but when he found him to be in earnest his gray beard trembled with indignation.

"Son of Abu Ayub," said he sternly, "what equivocation is this? Thou knowest the meaning of my promise, the first beast of burden, with its load, that should enter this portal. Take the strongest mule in my stables, load it with the most precious things of my treasury, and it is thine; but dare not to raise thy thoughts to her, who is the delight of my heart."

"What need I of wealth," cried the astrologer scornfully; "have I not the book of knowledge of Solomon the Wise, and through it, the command of the secret treasures of the earth? The princess is mine by right; thy royal word is pledged; I claim her as my own."

The princess sat upon her palfrey, in the pride of youth and beauty, and a light smile of scorn curled her rosy lip at this dispute between two gray beards for her charms. The wrath of the monarch got the better of his discretion. "Base son of the desert," cried he, "thou mayest be master of many arts, but know me for thy master—and presume not to juggle with thy king."

"My master!" echoed the astrologer, "my king! The monarch of a mole-hill to claim sway over him who possesses the talismans of Solomon! Farewell, Aben Habuz; reign over thy petty kingdom, and revel in thy paradise of fools—for me, I will laugh at thee in my philosophic retirement."

So saying, he seized the bridle of the palfrey, smote

the earth with his staff, and sank with the Gothic princess through the center of the barbican. The earth closed over them, and no trace remained of the opening by which they had descended. Aben Habuz was struck dumb for a time with astonishment. Recovering himself he ordered a thousand workmen to dig with pickax and spade into the ground where the astrologer had disappeared. They digged and digged, but in vain; the flinty bosom of the hill resisted their implements; or if they did penetrate a little way, the earth filled in again as fast as they threw it out. Aben Habuz sought the mouth of the cavern at the foot of the hill, leading to the subterranean palace of the astrologer, but it was nowhere to be found: where once had been an entrance, was now a solid surface of primeval rock. With the disappearance of Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub ceased the benefit of his talismans. The bronze horseman remained fixed with his face turned toward the hill, and his spear pointed to the spot where the astrologer had descended, as if there still lurked the deadliest foe of Aben Habuz. From time to time the sound of music and the tones of a female voice could be faintly heard from the bosom of the hill, and a peasant one day brought word to the king that in the preceding night he had found a fissure in the rock, by which he had crept in until he looked down into a subterranean hall, in which sat the astrologer on a magnificent divan, slumbering and nodding to the silver lyre of the princess, which seemed to hold a magic sway over his senses.

Aben Habuz sought for the fissure in the rock, but it was again closed. He renewed the attempt to unearth his rival, but all in vain. The spell of the hand and key was too potent to be counteracted by human power. As to the summit of the mountain, the site of the promised palace and garden, it remained a naked waste: either the boasted Elysium was hidden from sight by enchantment or was a mere fable of the astrologer. The world charitably supposed the latter, and some used to call the place "the king's folly," while others named it "the fool's paradise."

To add to the chagrin of Aben Habuz, the neighbors whom he had defied and taunted, and cut up at his leisure while master of the talismanic horseman, finding

him no longer protected by magic spell, made inroads into his territories from all sides, and the remainder of the life of the most pacific of monarchs was a tissue of turmoils.

At length Aben Habuz died and was buried. Ages have since rolled away. The Alhambra has been built on the eventful mountain, and in some measure realizes the fabled delights of the garden of Irem. The spell-bound gateway still exists, protected, no doubt, by the mystic hand and key, and now forms the gate of Justice, the grand entrance to the fortress. Under that gateway, it is said, the old astrologer remains in his subterranean hall, nodding on his divan, lulled by the silver lyre of the princess.

The old invalid sentinels, who mount guard at the gate, hear the strains occasionally in the summer nights, and, yielding to their soporific power, doze quietly at their posts. Nay, so drowsy an influence pervades the place that even those who watch by day may generally be seen nodding on the stone benches of the barbican or sleeping under the neighboring trees; so that it is, in fact, the drowsiest military post in all Christendom. All this, say the legends, will endure; from age to age the princess will remain captive to the astrologer, and the astrologer bound up in magic slumber by the princess, until the last day; unless the mystic hand shall grasp the fated key and dispel the whole charm of this enchanted mountain.

LEGEND OF THE THREE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESSES.

IN old times there reigned a Moorish king in Granada, whose name was Mohamed, to which his subjects added the appellation of el Haygari, or "the left-handed." Some say he was so called on account of his being really more expert with his sinister than his dexter hand; others, because he was prone to take everything by the wrong end; or, in other words, to mar wherever he meddled. Certain it is, either through misfortune or mismanagement, he was continually in trouble. Thrice was

he driven from his throne, and on one occasion barely escaped to Africa with his life, in the disguise of a fisherman. Still he was as brave as he was blundering, and, though left-handed, wielded his scimitar to such purpose that he each time re-established himself upon his throne, by dint of hard fighting. Instead, however, of learning wisdom from adversity, he hardened his neck, and stiffened his left arm in willfulness. The evils of a public nature which he thus brought upon himself and his kingdom may be learned by those who will delve into the Arabian annals of Granada; the present legend deals but with his domestic policy.

As this Mohamed was one day riding forth, with a train of his courtiers, by the foot of the mountain of Elvira, he met a band of horsemen returning from a foray into the land of the Christians. They were conducting a long string of mules laden with spoil, and many captives of both sexes, among whom the monarch was struck with the appearance of a beautiful damsel richly attired, who sat weeping, on a low palfrey, and heeded not the consoling words of a duenna, who rode beside her.

The monarch was struck with her beauty, and on inquiring of the captain of the troop, found that she was the daughter of the alcaide of a frontier fortress that had been surprised and sacked in the course of the foray.

Mohamed claimed her as his royal share of the booty, and had her conveyed to his harem in the Alhambra. There everything was devised to soothe her melancholy, and the monarch, more and more enamored, sought to make her his queen.

The Spanish maid at first repulsed his addresses. He was an infidel—he was the open foe of her country—what was worse, he was stricken in years!

The monarch, finding his assiduities of no avail, determined to enlist in his favor the duenna, who had been captured with the lady. She was an Andalusian by birth, whose Christian name is forgotten, being mentioned in Moorish legends by no other appellation than that of the discreet Cadiga—and discreet, in truth, she was, as her whole history makes evident. No sooner had the Moorish king held a little private conversation with her than she saw at once the cogency of his reasoning, and undertook his cause with her young mistress.

“Go to, now!” cried she; “what is there in all this to weep and wail about? Is it not better to be mistress of this beautiful palace, with all its gardens and fountains, than to be shut up within your father’s old frontier tower? As to this Mohamed being an infidel—what is that to the purpose? You marry him—not his religion. And if he is waxing a little old, the sooner will you be a widow and mistress of yourself. At any rate you are in his power—and must either be a queen or a slave. When in the hands of a robber it is better to sell one’s merchandise for a fair price than to have it taken by main force.”

The arguments of the discreet Cadiga prevailed. The Spanish lady dried her tears and became the spouse of Mohamed the left-handed. She even conformed in appearance to the faith of her royal husband, and her discreet duenna immediately became a zealous convert to the Moslem doctrines; it was then the latter received the Arabian name of Cadiga, and was permitted to remain in the confidential employ of her mistress.

In due process of time, the Moorish king was made the proud and happy father of three lovely daughters, all born at a birth. He could have wished they had been sons, but consoled himself with the idea that three daughters at a birth were pretty well for a man somewhat stricken in years, and left-handed.

As usual with all Moslem monarchs, he summoned his astrologers on this happy event. They cast the nativities of the three princesses, and shook their heads. “Daughters, O king,” said they, “are always precarious property; but these will most need your watchfulness when they arrive at a marriageable age. At that time gather them under your wing, and trust them to no other guardianship.”

Mohamed, the left-handed, was acknowledged by his courtiers to be a wise king, and was certainly so considered by himself. The prediction of the astrologers caused him but little disquiet, trusting to his ingenuity to guard his daughters and outwit the fates.

The threefold birth was the last matrimonial trophy of the monarch; his queen bore him no more children, and died within a few years, bequeathing her infant daughters to his love, and to the fidelity of the discreet Cadiga.

Many years had yet to elapse before the princesses would arrive at that period of danger, the marriageable age. "It is good, however, to be cautious in time," said the shrewd monarch; so he determined to have them reared in the royal castle of Salobreña. This was a sumptuous palace, incrustated as it were in a powerful Moorish fortress, on the summit of a hill that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea.

It was a royal retreat, in which the Moslem monarchs shut up such of their relations as might endanger their safety; allowing them all kinds of luxuries and amusements, in the midst of which they passed their lives in voluptuous indolence.

Here the princesses remained, immured from the world, but surrounded by enjoyments; and attended by female slaves who anticipated their wishes. They had delightful gardens for their recreation, filled with the rarest fruits and flowers, with aromatic groves and perfumed baths. On three sides the castle looked down upon a rich valley, enameled with all kinds of culture, and bounded by the lofty Alpuxarra Mountains; on the other side it overlooked the broad sunny sea.

In this delicious abode, in a propitious climate and under a cloudless sky, the three princesses grew up into wondrous beauty; but, though all reared alike, they gave early tokens of diversity of character. Their names were Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda; and such was the order of seniority, for there had been precisely three minutes between their births.

Zayda, the eldest, was of an intrepid spirit, and took the lead of her sisters in everything, as she had done in entering first into the world. She was curious and inquisitive, and fond of getting at the bottom of things.

Zorayda had a great feeling for beauty, which was the reason, no doubt, of her delighting to regard her own image in a mirror or a fountain, and of her fondness for flowers and jewels, and other tasteful ornaments.

As to Zorahayda, the youngest, she was soft and timid, and extremely sensitive, with a vast deal of disposable tenderness, as was evident from her number of pet flowers, and pet birds, and pet animals, all of which she cherished with the fondest care. Her amusements, too, were of a gentle nature, and mixed up with musing and

reverie. She would sit for hours in a balcony gazing on the sparkling stars of a summer night; or on the sea when lit up by the moon, and at such times the song of a fisherman faintly heard from the beach, or the notes of an arrafia or Moorish flute from some gliding bark, sufficed to elevate her feelings into ecstasy. The least uproar of the elements, however, filled her with dismay, and a clap of thunder was enough to throw her into a swoon.

Years moved on serenely, and Cadiga, to whom the princesses were confided, was faithful to her trust and attended them with unremitting care.

The castle of Salobreña, as has been said, was built upon a hill on the seacoast. One of the exterior walls straggled down the profile of the hill, until it reached a jutting rock overhanging the sea, with a narrow sandy beach at its foot, laved by the rippling billows. A small watch-tower on this rock had been fitted up as a pavilion with latticed windows to admit the sea-breeze. Here the princesses used to pass the sultry hours of midday.

The curious Zayda was one day seated at one of the windows of the pavilion, as her sisters, reclined on ottomans, were taking the siesta, or noontide slumber. Her attention had been attracted to a galley, which came coasting along, with measured strokes of the oar. As it drew near she observed that it was filled with armed men. The galley anchored at the foot of the tower: a number of Moorish soldiers landed on the narrow beach, conducting several Christian prisoners. The curious Zayda awakened her sisters, and all three peeped cautiously through the close jalousies of the lattice, which screened them from sight. Among the prisoners were three Spanish cavaliers, richly dressed. They were in the flower of youth, and of noble presence, and the lofty manner in which they carried themselves, though loaded with chains and surrounded with enemies, bespoke the grandeur of their souls. The princesses gazed with intense and breathless interest. Cooped up as they had been in this castle among female attendants, seeing nothing of the male sex but black slaves, or the rude fishermen of the seacoast, it is not to be wondered at that the appearance of three gallant cavaliers in the pride of youth and manly beauty should produce some commotion in their bosoms.

“Did ever nobler being tread the earth than that cavalier in crimson?” cried Zayda, the eldest of the sisters. “See how proudly he bears himself, as though all around him were his slaves!”

“But notice that one in green,” exclaimed Zorayda; “what grace! what elegance! what spirit!”

The gentle Zorahayda said nothing, but she secretly gave preference to the cavalier in green.

The princesses remained gazing until the prisoners were out of sight; then heaving long-drawn sighs, they turned round, looked at each other for a moment, and sat down musing and pensive on their ottomans.

The discreet Cadiga found them in this situation; they related to her what they had seen, and even the withered heart of the duenna was warmed. “Poor youths!” exclaimed she, “I’ll warrant their captivity makes many a fair and high-born lady’s heart ache in their native land! Ah, my children, you have little idea of the life these cavaliers lead in their own country. Such pranking at tournaments! such devotion to the ladies! such courting and serenading!”

The curiosity of Zayda was fully aroused. She was insatiable in her inquiries, and drew from the duenna the most animated pictures of the scenes of her youthful days and native land. The beautiful Zorayda bridled up, and slyly regarded herself in a mirror, when the theme turned upon the charms of the Spanish ladies; while Zorahayda suppressed a struggling sigh at the mention of moonlight serenades.

Every day the curious Zayda renewed her inquiries; and every day the sage duenna repeated her stories, which were listened to with unmoved interest, though frequent sighs, by her gentle auditors. The discreet old woman at length awakened to the mischief she might be doing. She had been accustomed to think of the princesses only as children, but they had imperceptibly ripened beneath her eye, and now bloomed before her three lovely damsels of the marriageable age. It is time, thought the duenna, to give notice to the king.

Mohamed, the left-handed, was seated one morning on the divan in one of the court halls of the Alhambra, when a noble arrived from the fortress of Salobreña, with a message from the sage Cadiga, congratulating him on

the anniversary of his daughters' birthday. The slave at the same time presented a delicate little basket decorated with flowers, within which, on a couch of vine and fig leaves, lay a peach, an apricot, and a nectarine, with their bloom and down and dewy sweetness upon them, and all in the early stage of tempting ripeness. The monarch was versed in the Oriental language of fruits and flowers, and readily divined the meaning of this emblematical offering.

"So," said he, "the critical period pointed out by the astrologers is arrived. My daughters are at a marriageable age. What is to be done? They are shut up from the eyes of men, they are under the eye of the discreet Cadiga—all very good—but still they are not under my own eye, as was prescribed by the astrologers. 'I must gather them under my wing, and trust to no other guardianship.'"

So saying, he ordered that a tower of the Alhambra should be prepared for their reception, and departed at the head of his guards for the fortress of Salobreña, to conduct them home in person.

About three years had elapsed since Mohamed had beheld his daughters, and he could scarcely credit his eyes at the wonderful change which that small space of time had made in their appearance. During the interval they had passed that wondrous boundary line in female life, which separates the crude, unformed, and thoughtless girl from the blooming, blushing, meditative woman. It is like passing from the flat, bleak, uninteresting plains of La Mancha to the voluptuous valleys and swelling hills of Andalusia.

Zayda was tall and finely formed, with a lofty demeanor and a penetrating eye. She entered with a stately and decided step, and made a profound reverence to Mohamed, treating him more as her sovereign than her father. Zorayda was of the middle height, with an alluring look and swimming gait, and a sparkling beauty heightened by the assistance of the toilet. She approached her father with a smile, kissed his hand, and saluted him with several stanzas from a popular Arabian poet, with which the monarch was delighted. Zorahayda was shy and timid; smaller than her sisters, and with a beauty of that tender, beseeching kind which looks for

fondness and protection. She was little fitted to command like her elder sister, or to dazzle like the second; but was rather formed to creep to the bosom of manly affection, to nestle within it, and be content. She drew near her father with a timid and almost faltering step, and would have taken his hand to kiss, but on looking up into his face, and seeing it beaming with a paternal smile, the tenderness of her nature broke forth, and she threw herself upon his neck.

Mohamed, the left-handed, surveyed his blooming daughters with mingled pride and perplexity; for while he exulted in their charms, he bethought himself of the prediction of the astrologers. "Three daughters! three daughters!" muttered he repeatedly to himself, "and all of a marriageable age! Here's tempting hesperian fruit, that requires a dragon watch!"

He prepared for his return to Granada, by sending heralds before him, commanding every one to keep out of the road by which he was to pass, and that all doors and windows should be closed at the approach of the princesses. This done, he set forth escorted by a troop of black horsemen of hideous aspect, and clad in shining armor.

The princesses rode beside the king, closely veiled, on beautiful white palfreys, with velvet caparisons embroidered with gold, and sweeping the ground; the bits and stirrups were of gold, and the silken bridles adorned with pearls and precious stones. The palfreys were covered with little silver bells that made the most musical tinkling as they ambled gently along. Woe to the unlucky wight, however, who lingered in the way when he heard the tinkling of these bells—the guards were ordered to cut him down without mercy.

The cavalcade was drawing near to Granada, when it overtook, on the banks of the river Xenil, a small body of Moorish soldiers, with a convoy of prisoners. It was too late for the soldiers to get out of the way, so they threw themselves on their faces on the earth, ordering their captives to do the like. Among the prisoners were the three identical cavaliers whom the princesses had seen from the pavilion. They either did not understand or were too haughty to obey the order, and remained standing and gazing upon the cavalcade as it approached.

The ire of the monarch was kindled at this flagrant defiance of his orders, and he determined to punish it with his own hand. Drawing his scimitar and pressing forward he was about to deal a left-handed blow, that would have been fatal to at least one of the gazers, when the princesses crowded round him, and implored mercy for the prisoners; even the timid Zorahayda forgot her shyness and became eloquent in their behalf. Mohamed paused, with uplifted scimitar, when the captain of the guard threw himself at his feet. "Let not your majesty," said he, "do a deed that may cause great scandal throughout the kingdom. These are three brave and noble Spanish knights who have been taken in battle, fighting like lions; they are of high birth, and may bring great ransoms."

"Enough," said the king; "I will spare their lives, but punish their audacity—let them be taken to the Vermilion towers and put to hard labor."

Mohamed was making one of his usual left-handed blunders. In the tumult and agitation of this blustering scene the veils of the three princesses had been thrown back, and the radiance of their beauty revealed; and in prolonging the parley the king had given that beauty time to have its full effect. In those days people fell in love much more suddenly than at present, as all ancient stories make manifest; it is not a matter of wonder, therefore, that the hearts of the three cavaliers were completely captivated, especially as gratitude was added to their admiration: it is a little singular, however, though no less certain, that each of them was enraptured with a several beauty. As to the princesses, they were more than ever struck with the noble demeanor of the captives, and cherished in their hearts all that they had heard of their valor and noble lineage.

The cavalcade resumed its march; the three princesses rode pensively along on their tinkling palfreys, now and then stealing a glance behind in search of the Christian captives, and the latter were conducted to their allotted prison in the Vermilion towers.

The residence provided for the princesses was one of the most dainty that fancy could devise. It was in a tower somewhat apart from the main palace of the Alhambra, though connected with it by the main wall that

encircled the whole summit of the hill. On one side it looked into the interior of the fortress, and had at its foot a small garden filled with the rarest flowers. On the other side it overlooked a deep embowered ravine, that separated the grounds of the Alhambra from those of the Generaliffe. The interior of the tower was divided into small fairy apartments, beautifully ornamented in the light Arabian style, surrounding a lofty hall, the vaulted roof of which rose almost to the summit of the tower. The walls and ceiling of the hall were adorned with arabesques and fretwork sparkling with gold, and with brilliant penciling. In the center of the marble pavement was an alabaster fountain, set round with aromatic shrubs and flowers, and throwing up a jet of water that cooled the whole edifice and had a lulling sound. Round the hall were suspended cages of gold and silver wire, containing singing birds of the finest plumage or sweetest note.

The princesses having been represented as always cheerful when in the castle of Salobreña, the king had expected to see them enraptured with the Alhambra. To his surprise, however, they began to pine, and grew green and melancholy, and dissatisfied with everything around them. The flowers yielded them no fragrance; the song of the nightingale disturbed their night's rest, and they were out of all patience with the alabaster fountain, with its eternal drop, drop, and splash, splash, from morning till night, and from night till morning.

The king, who was somewhat of a testy, tyrannical old man, took this at first in high dudgeon; but he reflected that his daughters had arrived at an age when the female mind expands and its desires augment. "They are no longer children," said he to himself; "they are women grown, and require suitable objects to interest them."

He put in requisition, therefore, all the dressmakers, and the jewelers, and the artificers in gold and silver throughout the Zacatin of Granada, and the princesses were overwhelmed with robes of silk and of tissue and of brocade, and cashmere shawls, and necklaces of pearls, and diamonds, and rings and bracelets, and anklets, and all manner of precious things.

All, however, was of no avail. The princesses continued pale and languid in the midst of their finery, and

looked like three blighted rosebuds, drooping from one stalk. The king was at his wit's end. He had in general a laudable confidence in his own judgment, and never took advice. "The whims and caprices of three marriageable damsels, however, are sufficient," said he, "to puzzle the shrewdest head." So, for once in his life, he called in the aid of counsel.

The person to whom he applied was the experienced duenna.

"Cadiga," said the king, "I know you to be one of the most discreet women in the whole world, as well as one of the most trustworthy; for these reasons I have always continued you about the persons of my daughters. Fathers cannot be too wary in whom they repose such confidence. I now wish you to find out the secret malady that is preying upon the princesses, and to devise some means of restoring them to health and cheerfulness."

Cadiga promised implicit obedience. In fact, she knew more of the malady of the princesses than they did themselves. Shutting herself up with them, however, she endeavored to insinuate herself into their confidence.

"My dear children, what is the reason you are so dismal and downcast, in so beautiful a place, where you have everything that heart can wish?"

The princesses looked vacantly round the apartment, and sighed.

"What more, then, would you have? Shall I get you the wonderful parrot that talks all languages, and is the delight of Granada?"

"Odious!" exclaimed the Princess Zayda. "A horrid screaming bird that chatters words without ideas! One must be without brains to tolerate such a pest."

"Shall I send for a monkey from the rock of Gibraltar, to divert you with his antics?"

"A monkey! fough!" cried Zorayda, "the detestable mimic of man. I hate the nauseous animal."

"What say you to the famous black singer, Casem, from the royal harem in Morocco. They say he has a voice as fine as a woman's."

"I am terrified at the sight of these black slaves," said the delicate Zorahayda; "besides, I have lost all relish for music."

"Ah, my child, you would not say so," replied the old

woman slyly, "had you heard the music I heard last evening, from the three Spanish cavaliers whom we met on our journey. But bless me, children! what is the matter that you blush so and are in such a flutter?"

"Nothing, nothing, good mother, pray proceed."

"Well—as I was passing by the Vermilion towers last evening, I saw the three cavaliers resting after their day's labor. One was playing on the guitar so gracefully, and the others sang by turns—and they did it in such style that the very guards seemed like statues or men enchanted. Aliah forgive me, I could not help being moved at hearing the songs of my native country. And then to see three such noble and handsome youths in chains and slavery!"

Here the kind-hearted old woman could not restrain her tears.

"Perhaps, mother, you could manage to procure us a sight of these cavaliers," said Zayda.

"I think," said Zorayda, "a little music would be quite reviving."

The timid Zorahayda said nothing, but threw her arms round the neck of Cadiga.

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the discreet old woman; "what are you talking of, my children? Your father would be the death of us all if he heard of such a thing. To be sure, these cavaliers are evidently well-bred and high-minded youths—but what of that! they are the enemies of our faith, and you must not even think of them, but with abhorrence."

There is an admirable intrepidity in the female will, particularly about the marriageable age, which is not to be deterred by dangers and prohibitions. The princesses hung round their old duenna, and coaxed and entreated, and declared that a refusal would break their hearts. What could she do? She was certainly the most discreet old woman in the whole world, and one of the most faithful servants to the king—but was she to see three beautiful princesses break their hearts for the mere tinkling of a guitar? Besides, though she had been so long among the Moors, and changed her faith, in imitation of her mistress, like a trusty follower, yet she was a Spaniard born, and had the lingerings of Christianity in

her heart. So she set about to contrive how the wishes of the princesses might be gratified.

The Christian captives confined in the Vermilion towers were under the charge of a big-whiskered, broad-shouldered renegado, called Hussein Baba, who was reported to have a most itching palm. She went to him privately, and slipping a broad piece of gold into his hand, "Hussein Baba," said she, "my mistresses, the three princesses, who are shut up in the tower and in sad want of amusement, have heard of the musical talents of the three Spanish cavaliers and are desirous of hearing a specimen of their skill. I am sure you are too kind-hearted to refuse them so innocent a gratification."

"What, and to have my head set grinning over the gate of my own tower—for that would be the reward, if the king should discover it."

"No danger of anything of the kind; the affair may be managed so that the whim of the princesses may be gratified, and their father be never the wiser. You know the deep ravine outside of the walls, that passes immediately below the tower. Put the three Christians to work there, and at the intervals of their labor let them play and sing, as if for their own recreation. In this way the princesses will be able to hear them from the windows of the tower, and you may be sure of their paying well for your compliance."

As the good old woman concluded her harangue she kindly pressed the rough hand of the renegado, and left within it another piece of gold.

Her eloquence was irresistible. The very next day the three cavaliers were put to work in the ravine. During the noontide heat when their fellow laborers were sleeping in the shade, and the guard nodded drowsily at his post, they seated themselves among the herbage at the foot of the tower and sang a Spanish rondelay to the accompaniment of the guitar.

The glen was deep, the tower was high, but their voices rose distinctly in the stillness of the summer noon. The princesses listened from their balcony; they had been taught the Spanish language by their duenna, and were moved by the tenderness of the song.

The discreet Cadiga, on the contrary, was terribly shocked. "Allah preserve us," cried she, "they are

singing a love ditty addressed to yourselves—did ever mortal hear of such audacity? I will run to the slave master and have them soundly bastinadoed.”

“What, bastinado such gallant cavaliers, and for singing so charmingly?” The three beautiful princesses were filled with horror at the idea. With all her virtuous indignation, the good old woman was of a placable nature and easily appeased. Besides, the music seemed to have a beneficial effect upon her young mistresses. A rosy bloom had already come to their cheeks, and their eyes began to sparkle. She made no further objection, therefore, to the amorous ditty of the cavaliers.

When it was finished the princesses remained silent for a time; at length Zorayda took up a lute, and with a sweet, though faint and trembling voice, warbled a little Arabian air, the burden of which was, “The rose is concealed among her leaves, but she listens with delight to the song of the nightingale.”

From this time forward the cavaliers worked almost daily in the ravine. The considerate Hussein Baba became more and more indulgent, and daily more prone to sleep at his post. For some time a vague intercourse was kept up by popular songs and romances, which in some measure responded to each other, and breathed the feelings of the parties. By degrees the princesses showed themselves at the balcony, when they could do so without being perceived by the guards. They conversed with the cavaliers also by means of flowers, with the symbolical language of which they were mutually acquainted: the difficulties of their intercourse added to its charms and strengthened the passion they had so singularly conceived; for love delights to struggle with difficulties, and thrives the most hardily on the scantiest soil.

The change effected in the looks and spirits of the princesses by this secret intercourse surprised and gratified the left-handed king; but no one was more elated than the discreet Cadiga, who considered it all owing to her able management.

At length there was an interruption in this telegraphic correspondence; for several days the cavaliers ceased to make their appearance in the glen. The three beautiful princesses looked out from the tower in vain. In vain

they stretched their swan-like necks from the balcony; in vain they sang like captive nightingales in their cage; nothing was to be seen of their Christian lovers, not a note responded from the groves. The discreet Cadiga sallied forth in quest of intelligence, and soon returned with a face full of trouble. "Ah, my children!" cried she, "I saw what all this would come to, but you would have your way; you may now hang up your lutes on the willows. The Spanish cavaliers are ransomed by their families; they are down in Granada, and preparing to return to their native country."

The three beautiful princesses were in despair at the tidings. The fair Zayda was indignant at the slight put upon them, in being thus deserted without a parting word. Zorayda wrung her hands and cried, and looked in the glass, and wiped away her tears and cried afresh. The gentle Zorahayda leaned over the balcony and wept in silence, and her tears fell drop by drop among the flowers of the bank where the faithless cavaliers had so often been seated.

The discreet Cadiga did all in her power to soothe their sorrow. "Take comfort, my children," said she, "this is nothing when you are used to it. This is the way of the world. Ah, when you are as old as I am you will know how to value these men. I'll warrant these cavaliers have their loves among the Spanish beauties of Cordova and Seville, and will soon be serenading under their balconies, and thinking no more of the Moorish beauties in the Alhambra. Take comfort, therefore, my children, and drive them from your hearts."

The comforting words of the discreet Cadiga only redoubled the distress of the princesses, and for two days they continued inconsolable. On the morning of the third the good old woman entered their apartment all ruffling with indignation.

"Who would have believed such insolence in mortal man?" exclaimed she, as soon as she could find words to express herself; "but I am rightly served for having connived at this deception of your worthy father—never talk more to me of your Spanish cavaliers."

"Why, what has happened, good Cadiga?" exclaimed the princesses, in breathless anxiety.

"What has happened? treason has happened!—or what

is almost as bad, treason has been proposed—and to me—the faithfulest of subjects—the trustiest of duennas—yes, my children—the Spanish cavaliers have dared to tamper with me; that I should persuade you to fly with them to Cordova, and become their wives.”

Here the excellent old woman covered her face with her hands, and gave way to a violent burst of grief and indignation.

The three beautiful princesses turned pale and red, and trembled, and looked down, and cast shy looks at each other, but said nothing: meantime, the old woman sat rocking backward and forward in violent agitation, and now and then breaking out into exclamations—“That ever I should live to be so insulted—I, the faithfulest of servants!”

At length the eldest princess, who had most spirit, and always took the lead, approached her, and laying her hand upon her shoulder—“Well, mother,” said she, “supposing we were willing to fly with these Christian cavaliers—is such a thing possible?”

The good old woman paused suddenly in her grief, and looking up—“Possible!” echoed she, “to be sure it is possible. Have not the cavaliers already bribed Hussein Baba, the renegado captain of the guard, and arranged the whole plan? But then to think of deceiving your father—your father, who has placed such confidence in me?”

Here the worthy old woman gave way to a fresh burst of grief, and began again to rock backward and forward, and to wring her hands.

“But our father has never placed any confidence in us,” said the eldest princess; “but has trusted to bolts and bars, and treated us as captives.”

“Why, that is true enough,” replied the old woman, again pausing in her grief. “He has indeed treated you most unreasonably. Keeping you shut up here to waste your bloom in a moping old tower, like roses left to wither in a flower jar. But then to fly from your native land?”

“And is not the land we fly to the native land of our mother, where we shall live in freedom? and shall we not each have a youthful husband in exchange for a severe old father?”

“Why, that again is all very true—and your father, I must confess, is rather tyrannical. But what then”—relapsing into her grief—“would you leave me behind to bear the brunt of his vengeance?”

“By no means, my good Cadiga. Cannot you fly with us?”

“Very true, my child, and to tell the truth, when I talked the matter over with Hussein Baba, he promised to take care of me if I would accompany you in your flight; but then, bethink you, my children; are you willing to renounce the faith of your father?”

“The Christian faith was the original faith of our mother,” said the eldest princess; “I am ready to embrace it; and so I am sure are my sisters.”

“Right again!” exclaimed the old woman, brightening up. “It was the original faith of your mother; and bitterly did she lament, on her deathbed, that she had renounced it. I promised her then to take care of your souls, and I am rejoiced to see that they are now in a fair way to be saved. Yes, my children; I too was born a Christian—and have always been a Christian in my heart; and am resolved to return to the faith. I have talked on the subject with Hussein Baba, who is a Spaniard by birth, and comes from a place not far from my native town. He is equally anxious to see his own country and to be reconciled to the church, and the cavaliers have promised that if we are disposed to become man and wife on returning to our native land, they will provide for us handsomely.”

In a word, it appeared that this extremely discreet and provident old woman had consulted with the cavaliers and the renegado, and had concerted the whole plan of escape. The eldest princess immediately assented to it, and her example as usual determined the conduct of her sisters. It is true, the youngest hesitated, for she was gentle and timid of soul, and there was a struggle in her bosom between filial feeling and youthful passion. The latter, however, as usual, gained the victory, and with silent tears and stifled sighs she prepared herself for flight.

The rugged hill on which the Alhambra is built was in old times perforated with subterranean passages, cut through the rock, and leading from the fortress to

various parts of the city, and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and the Xenil. They had been constructed at different times, by the Moorish kings, as means of escape from sudden insurrection, or of secretly issuing forth on private enterprises. Many of them are now entirely lost, while others remain, partly choked up with rubbish, and partly walled up—monuments of the jealous precautions and warlike stratagems of the Moorish government. By one of these passages Hussein Baba had undertaken to conduct the princesses to a sally-port beyond the walls of the city, where the cavaliers were to be ready with fleet steeds to bear them all over the borders.

The appointed night arrived. The tower of the princesses had been locked up as usual, and the Alhambra was buried in deep sleep. Toward midnight the discreet Cadiga listened from a balcony of a window that looked into the garden. Hussein Baba, the renegado, was already below, and gave the appointed signal. The duenna fastened the end of a ladder of ropes to the balcony, lowered it into the garden, and descended. The two eldest princesses followed her with beating hearts; but when it came to the turn of the youngest princess, Zorahayda, she hesitated and trembled. Several times she ventured a delicate little foot upon the ladder, and as often drew it back; while her poor little heart fluttered more and more the longer she delayed. She cast a wistful look back into the silken chamber; she had lived in it, to be sure, like a bird in a cage, but within it she was secure—who could not tell what dangers might beset her should she flutter forth into the wide world? Now she bethought her of her gallant Christian lover, and her little foot was instantly upon the ladder, and anon she thought of her father, and shrank back. But fruitless is the attempt to describe the conflict in the bosom of one so young, and tender, and loving, but so timid and so ignorant of the world. In vain her sisters implored, the duenna scolded, and the renegado blasphemed beneath the balcony. The gentle little Moorish maid stood doubting and wavering on the verge of elopement, tempted by the sweetness of the sin, but terrified at its perils.

Every moment increased the danger of discovery. A

distant tramp was heard. "The patrols are walking the rounds," cried the renegado; "if we linger longer we perish—princess, descend instantly, or we leave you."

Zorahayda was for a moment in fearful agitation, then loosening the ladder of ropes with desperate resolution she flung it from the balcony.

"It is decided," cried she, "flight is now out of my power! Allah guide and bless ye, my dear sisters!"

The two eldest princesses were shocked at the thoughts of leaving her behind, and would fain have lingered, but the patrol was advancing; the renegado was furious, and they were hurried away to the subterraneous passage. They groped their way through a fearful labyrinth cut through the heart of the mountain, and succeeded in reaching, undiscovered, an iron gate that opened outside of the walls. The Spanish cavaliers were waiting to receive them, disguised as Moorish soldiers of the guard commanded by the renegado.

The lover of Zorahayda was frantic when he learned that she had refused to leave the tower; but there was no time to waste in lamentations. The two princesses were placed behind their lovers; the discreet Cadiga mounted behind the renegado, and all set off at a round pace in the direction of the pass of Lopè, which leads through the mountains toward Cordova.

They had not proceeded far when they heard the noise of drums and trumpets from the battlements of the Alhambra. "Our flight is discovered," said the renegado. "We have fleet steeds, the night is dark, and we may distance all pursuit," replied the cavaliers.

They put spurs to their horses and scoured across the Vega. They attained to the foot of the mountain of Elvira, which stretches like a promontory into the plain. The renegado paused and listened. "As yet," said he, "there is no one on our traces, we shall make good our escape to the mountains." While he spoke a ball of fire sprang up in a light blaze on the top of the watch-tower of the Alhambra.

"Confusion!" cried the renegado, "that fire will put all the guards of the passes on the alert. Away, away, spur like mad; there is no time to be lost."

Away they dashed—the clattering of their horses' hoofs echoed from rock to rock as they swept along the

road that skirts the rocky mountain of Elvira. As they galloped on they beheld that the ball of fire of the Alhambra was answered in every direction; light after light blazed on the atalayas or watch-towers of the mountains.

“Forward! forward!” cried the renegado, with many an oath—“to the bridge! to the bridge! before the alarm has reached there.”

They doubled the promontory of the mountain, and arrived in sight of the famous Puente del Pinos, that crosses a rushing stream often dyed with Christian and Moslem blood. To their confusion the tower on the bridge blazed with lights and glittered with armed men. The renegado pulled up his steed, rose in his stirrups and looked about him for a moment, then beckoning to the cavaliers he struck off from the road, skirted the river for some distance, and dashed into its waters. The cavaliers called upon the princesses to cling to them, and did the same. They were borne for some distance down the rapid current, the surges roared round them, but the beautiful princesses clung to their Christian knights and never uttered a complaint. The cavaliers attained the opposite bank in safety, and were conducted by the renegado, by rude and unfrequented paths, and wild barrancos through the heart of the mountains, so as to avoid all the regular passes. In a word, they succeeded in reaching the ancient city of Cordova, when their restoration to their country and friends was celebrated with great rejoicings, for they were of the noblest families. The beautiful princesses were forthwith received into the bosom of the church, and after being in all due form made regular Christians were rendered happy lovers.

In our hurry to make good the escape of the princesses across the river and up the mountains, we forgot to mention the fate of the discreet Cadiga. She had clung like a cat to Hussein Baba, in the scamper across the Vega, screaming at every bound and drawing many an oath from the whiskered renegado; but when he prepared to plunge his steed into the river her terror knew no bounds.

“Grasp me not so tightly,” cried Hussein Baba; “hold on by my belt, and fear nothing.”

She held firmly with both hands by the leathern belt that girded the broad-backed renegado; but when he halted with the cavaliers to take breath on the mountain summit, the duenna was no longer to be seen.

“What has become of Cadiga?” cried the princesses in alarm.

“I know not,” replied the renegado. “My belt came loose in the midst of the river, and Cadiga was swept with it down the stream. The will of Allah be done!—but it was an embroidered belt and of great price!”

There was no time to waste in idle reports, yet bitterly did the princesses bewail the loss of their faithful and discreet counselor. That excellent old woman, however, did not lose more than half of her nine lives in the stream. A fisherman who was drawing his nets some distance down the stream brought her to land and was not a little astonished at his miraculous draught. What further became of the discreet Cadiga, the legend does not mention. Certain it is that she evinced her discretion in never venturing within the reach of Mohamed, the left-handed.

Almost as little is known of the conduct of that sagacious monarch when he discovered the escape of his daughters and the deceit practiced upon him by the most faithful of servants. It was the only instance in which he had called in the aid of counsel, and he was never afterward known to be guilty of a similar weakness. He took good care, however, to guard his remaining daughter, who had no disposition to elope. It is thought, indeed, that she secretly repented having remained behind. Now and then she was seen leaning on the battlements of the tower and looking mournfully toward the mountains in the direction of Cordova; and sometimes the notes of her lute were heard accompanying plaintive ditties in which she was said to lament the loss of her sisters and her lover, and to bewail her solitary life. She died young and, according to popular rumor, was buried in a vault beneath the tower, and her untimely fate has given rise to more than one traditionary fable.

LOCAL TRADITIONS.

THE common people of Spain have an Oriental passion for story-telling and are fond of the marvelous. They will gather round the doors of their cottages on summer evenings, or in the great cavernous chimney corners of their ventas in the winter, and listen with insatiable de-

light to miraculous legends of saints, perilous adventures of travelers, and daring exploits of robbers and contrabandistas. The wild and solitary nature of a great part of Spain; the imperfect state of knowledge; the scantiness of general topics of conversation, and the romantic, adventurous life that every one leads in a land where traveling is yet in its primitive state, all contribute to cherish this love of oral narration and to produce a strong expression of the extravagant and wonderful. There is no theme, however, more prevalent or popular than that of treasures buried by the Moors. It pervades the whole country. In traversing the wild Sierras, the scenes of ancient prey and exploit, you cannot see a Moorish atalaya or watch-tower perched among the cliffs, or beetling above its rock-built village, but your mule-teen, on being closely questioned, will suspend the smoking of his cigarillo to tell some tale of Moslem gold buried beneath its foundations; nor is there a ruined alcazar in a city but has its golden tradition, handed down, from generation to generation, among the poor people of the neighborhood.

These, like most popular fictions, have had some groundwork in fact. During the wars between Moor and Christian, which distracted the country for centuries, towns and castles were liable frequently and suddenly to change owners; and the inhabitants, during sieges and assaults, were fain to bury their money and jewels in the earth, or hide them in vaults and wells, as is often done at the present day in the despotic and belligerent countries of the East. At the time of the expulsion of the Moors, also, many of them concealed their most precious effects, hoping that their exile would be but temporary and that they would be enabled to return and retrieve their treasures at some future day. It is certain that, from time to time, hoards of gold and silver coin have been accidentally dugged up, after a lapse of centuries, from among the ruins of Moorish fortresses and habitations, and it requires but a few facts of the kind to give birth to a thousand fictions.

The stories thus originating have generally something of an Oriental tinge, and are marked with that mixture of the Arabic and Gothic which seems to me to characterize everything in Spain; and especially in its southern

provinces. The hidden wealth is always laid under magic spell, and secured by charm and talisman. Sometimes it is guarded by uncouth monsters, or fiery dragons; sometimes by enchanted Moors, who sit by it in armor, with drawn swords, but motionless as statues, maintaining a sleepless watch for ages.

The Alhambra, of course, from the peculiar circumstances of its history, is a stronghold for popular fictions of the kind, and curious reliques, dug up from time to time, have contributed to strengthen them. At one time an earthen vessel was found containing Moorish coins and the skeleton of a cock, which, according to the opinion of shrewd inspectors, must have been buried alive. At another time a vessel was dugged up, containing a great scarabæus, or beetle, of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscriptions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. In this way the wits of the ragged brood who inhabit the Alhambra have been set wool gathering, until there is not a hall, or tower, or vault of the old fortress that has not been made the scene of some marvelous tradition.

I have already given brief notices of some related to me by the authentic Mateo Ximenes, and now subjoin one wrought out from various particulars gathered among the gossips of the fortress.

LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY.

JUST within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open esplanade, called the place or square of the cisterns (*la plaza de los algibes*), so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water hidden from sight, and which have existed from the time of the Moors. At one corner of this esplanade is a Moorish well, cut through the living rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. The wells made by the Moors are always in repute, for it is well known what pains they took to penetrate to the purest and sweetest springs and fountains. The one we are speaking of is famous throughout Granada, insomuch that the water-carriers, some bearing

great water-jars on their shoulders, others driving asses before them, laden with earthen vessels, are ascending and descending the steep woody avenues of the Alhambra from early dawn until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells, ever since the scriptural days, have been noted gossiping places in hot climates, and at the well in question there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the livelong day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious, do-nothing folk of the fortress, who sit here on the stone benches under an awning spread over the well to shelter the toll-gatherer from the sun, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question any water-carrier that arrives about the news of the city, and make long comments on everything they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen lingering with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle of these worthies.

Among the water-carriers who once resorted to this well there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged little fellow, named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Being a water-carrier, he was a Gallego, or native of Galicia, of course. Nature seems to have formed races of men as she has of animals for different kinds of drudgery. In France the shoeblacks are all Savoyards, the porters of hotels all Swiss, and in the days of hoops and hair powder in England, no man could give the regular swing to a sedan chair but a bog-trotting Irishman. So in Spain the carriers of water and bearers of burdens are all sturdy little natives of Galicia. No man says, "get me a porter," but, "call a Gallego."

To return from this digression. Peregil the Gallego had begun business with merely a great earthen jar, which he carried upon his shoulder; by degrees he rose in the world and was enabled to purchase an assistant of a correspondent class of animals, being a stout shaggy-haired donkey. On each side of this his long-eared aide-de-camp, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars covered with fig leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water-carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey,

singing forth the usual summer note that resounds through the Spanish towns, "*quien quiere agua in agua mas fria que la nieve*. Who wants water—water colder than snow—who wants water from the well of the Alhambra—cold as ice and clear as crystal?" When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused a smile, and if, perchance, it was a comely dame or dimpling damsel, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil the Gallego was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest, and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who sings loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening. He had a helpmate too who was anything but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill in dancing the bolero and rattling the castanets, and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketing parties into the country on Sundays and saints' days, and those innumerable holidays which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie-a-bed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water; neglecting house, household and everything else, to loiter slipshod in the houses of her gossip neighbors.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars; and however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children too, even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated, for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged little brood. The great pleasure of honest Pere-

gil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holiday and had a handful of maravedies to spare, to take the whole litter forth with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among the orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holiday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water-carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry; the night was one of those delicious moonlights, which tempt the inhabitant of those southern climes to indemnify themselves for the heat and inaction of the day, by lingering in the open air and enjoying its tempered sweetness until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate, painstaking little father, thought of his hungry children. "One more journey to the well," said he to himself, "to earn a good Sunday's puchero for the little ones." So saying, he trudged rapidly up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song or refreshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu for provender in Spain, for all beasts of burden.

When arrived at the well he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on the stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach.

"I am faint and ill," said he; "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay thee double what thou couldst gain by thy jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water-carrier was touched with compassion at the appeal of the stranger. "God forbid," said he, "that I should ask fee or reward for doing a common act of humanity."

He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the earth.

When they entered the city the water-carrier de-

manded whither he should conduct him. "Alas!" said the Moor faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation. I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath thy roof, and thou shall be amply repaid."

Honest Peregil thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow being in so forlorn a plight; so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth, open-mouthed as usual, on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with affright when they beheld the turbaned stranger, and hid themselves behind their mother. The latter stepped forth intrepidly, like a ruffling hen before her brood, when a vagrant dog approaches.

"What infidel companion," cried she, "is this you have brought home at this late hour to draw upon us the eyes of the Inquisition?"

"Be quiet, wife," replied the Gallego; "here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home; wouldst thou turn him forth to perish in the streets?"

The wife would still have remonstrated, for, though she lived in a hovel, she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house; the little water-carrier, however, for once was stiff-necked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and a sheepskin for him, on the ground, in the coolest part of the house; being the only kind of bed that his poverty afforded.

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the ministering skill of the simple water-carrier. The eye of the poor patient acknowledged his kindness. During an interval of his fits he called him to his side, and addressing him in a low voice: "My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity." So saying, he opened his albornoz, or cloak, and showed a small box of sandalwood, strapped round his body.

"God grant, my friend," replied the worthy little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be."

The Moor shook his head; he laid his hand upon the

box, and would have said something more concerning it, but his convulsions returned with increased violence, and in a little while he expired.

The water-carrier's wife was now as one distracted. "This comes," said she, "of your foolish good nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be sent to prison as murderers; and if we escape with our lives, shall be ruined by notaries and alguazils."

Poor Peregil was in equal tribulation, and almost repented himself of having done a good deed. At length a thought struck him. "It is not yet day," said he. "I can convey the dead body out of the city and bury it in the sands on the banks of the Xenil. No one saw the Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know anything of his death." So said, so done. The wife aided him: they rolled the body of the unfortunate Moslem in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the ass, and Mattias set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water-carrier a barber, named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasel-faced, spider-legged varlet, supple and insinuating; the famous Barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept with but one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that, even in his sleep, he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of scandalous chronicle for the quidnuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

This meddlesome barber heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour of night, and the exclamations of his wife and children. His head was instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a lookout, and he saw his neighbor assist a man in a Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was so strange an occurrence that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night—every five minutes he was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of his neighbor's door, and before daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The inquisitive barber was in a fidget; he slipped on his clothes, and stealing forth silently, followed the water-carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury something that had the appearance of a dead body.

The barber hied him home and fidgeted about his shop, setting everything upside down, until sunrise. He then took a basin under his arm, and sallied forth to the house of his daily customer, the Alcalde.

The Alcalde was just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin of hot water under his chin, and began to mollify his beard with his fingers.

"Strange doings," said Pedrugo, who played barber and newsmonger at the same time. "Strange doings! Robbery, and murder, and burial, all in one night!"

"Hey? how! What is it you say?" cried the Alcalde.

"I say," replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, for a Spanish barber disdains to employ a brush; "I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moorish Mussulman, and buried him this blessed night—*maldita sea la noche*—accursed be the night for the same!"

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the Alcalde.

"Be patient, señor, and you shall hear all about it," replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then recounted all that he had seen, going through both operations at the same time, shaving his beard, washing his chin, and wiping him dry with a dirty napkin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moslem.

Now it so happened that this Alcalde was one of the most overbearing, and at the same time most griping and corrupt, curmudgeons in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery; doubtless there must be rich spoil; how was it to be secured into the legitimate hands of the law? for as to merely entrapping the delinquent—that would be feeding the gallows; but entrapping the booty—that would be enriching the judge; and such, according to his creed, was the great

end of justice. So thinking, he summoned to his presence his trustiest alguazil—a gaunt, hungry-looking varlet, clad, according to the custom of his order, in the ancient Spanish garb—a broad black beaver, turned up at the sides; a quaint ruff, a small black cloak dangling from his shoulders; rusty black underclothes that set off his spare wiry form; while in his hand he bore a slender white wand, the dreaded insignia of his office. Such was the legal bloodhound of the ancient Spanish breed, that he put upon the traces of the unlucky water-carrier; and such was his speed and certainty that he was upon the haunches of poor Peregil before he had returned to his dwelling, and brought both him and his donkey before the dispenser of justice.

The Alcalde bent upon him one of his most terrific frowns. “Hark ye, culprit,” roared he in a voice that made the knees of the little Gallego smite together—“Hark ye, culprit! there is no need of denying thy guilt; everything is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime thou hast committed, but I am merciful, and readily listen to reason. The man that has been murdered in thy house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. It was doubtless in a fit of religious zeal that thou hast slain him. I will be indulgent, therefore; render up the property of which thou hast robbed him, and we will hush the matter up.”

The poor water-carrier called upon all the saints to witness his innocence; alas! not one of them appeared, and if there had, the Alcalde would have disbelieved the whole calendar. The water-carrier related the whole story of the dying Moor with the straightforward simplicity of truth, but it was all in vain: “Wilt thou persist in saying,” demanded the judge, “that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels, which were the object of thy cupidity?”

“As I hope to be saved, your worship,” replied the water-carrier, “he had nothing but a small box of sandalwood, which he bequeathed to me in reward of my services.”

“A box of sandalwood! a box of sandalwood!” exclaimed the Alcalde, his eyes sparkling at the idea of precious jewels; “and where is this box? where have you concealed it?”

“An’ it please your grace,” replied the water-carrier, “it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship.”

He had hardly spoken the words when the keen alguazil darted off and reappeared in an instant with the mysterious box of sandalwood. The Alcalde opened it with an eager and trembling hand; all pressed forward to gaze upon the treasures it was expected to contain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper!

When there is nothing to be gained by the conviction of a prisoner, justice, even in Spain, is apt to be impartial. The Alcalde, having recovered from his disappointment and found there was really no booty in the case, now listened dispassionately to the explanation of the water-carrier, which was corroborated by the testimony of his wife. Being convinced, therefore, of his innocence, he discharged him from arrest; nay, more, he permitted him to carry off the Moor’s legacy, the box of sandalwood and its contents, as the well-merited reward of his humanity; but he retained his donkey in payment of cost and charges.

Behold the unfortunate little Gallego reduced once more to the necessity of being his own water-carrier, and trudging up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder. As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon his usual good-humor forsook him. “Dog of an Alcalde!” would he cry, “to rob a poor man of the means of his subsistence—of the best friend he had in the world!” And then, at the remembrance of the beloved companion of his labors, all the kindness of his nature would break forth. “Ah, donkey of my heart!” would he exclaim, resting his burden on a stone, and wiping the sweat from his brow, “Ah, donkey of my heart! I warrant me thou thinkest of thy old master! I warrant me thou missest the water jars—poor beast!”

To add to his afflictions his wife received him, on his return home, with whimperings and repinings; she had clearly the vantage-ground of him, having warned him not to commit the egregious act of hospitality that had brought on him all these misfortunes, and like a know-

ing woman, she took every occasion to throw her superior sagacity in his teeth. If ever her children lacked food or needed a new garment, she would answer with a sneer, "Go to your father; he's heir to King Chico of the Alhambra. Ask him to help you out of the Moor's strong box."

Was ever poor mortal more soundly punished for having done a good action! The unlucky Peregil was grieved in flesh and spirit, but still he bore meekly with the railings of his spouse. At length one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she taunted him in the usual manner, he lost all patience. He did not venture to retort upon her, but his eye rested upon the box of sandalwood, which lay on a shelf with lid half open, as if laughing in mockery of his vexation. Seizing it up he dashed it with indignation on the floor. "Unlucky was the day that I ever set eyes on thee," he cried, "or sheltered thy master beneath my roof."

As the box struck the floor the lid flew wide open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth. Peregil sat regarding the scroll for some time in moody silence. At length rallying his ideas, "Who knows," thought he, "but this writing may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care." Picking it up, therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying water through the streets, he stopped at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangiers, who sold trinkets and perfumery in the Zacatin, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively, then stroked his beard and smiled. "This manuscript," said he, "is a form of incantation for the recovery of hidden treasure, that is under the power of enchantment. It is said to have such virtue that the strongest bolts and bars, nay, the adamantine rock itself, will yield before it."

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me? I am no enchanter, and know nothing of buried treasure." So saying he shouldered his water-jar, left the scroll in the hands of the Moor, and trudged forward on his daily rounds.

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well of the Alhambra, he found a number of gossips assembled at the place, and their conversation,

as is not unusual at that shadowy hour, turned upon old tales and traditions of a supernatural nature. Being all poor as rats, they dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the popular theme of enchanted riches left by the Moors in various parts of the Alhambra. Above all they concurred in the belief that there were great treasures buried deep in the earth under the tower of the Seven Floors.

These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as he returned alone down the darkling avenues. "If, after all, there should be treasure hid beneath that tower—and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!" In the sudden ecstasy of the thought he had well nigh let fall his water-jar.

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for the thoughts that were bewildering his brain. In the morning, bright and early, he repaired to the shop of the Moor, and told him all that was passing in his mind. "You can read Arabic," said he, "suppose we go together to the tower and try the effect of the charm; if it fails we are no worse off than before, but if it succeeds we will share equally all the treasure we may discover."

"Hold," replied the Moslem, "this writing is not sufficient of itself; it must be read at midnight, by the light of a taper singularly compounded and prepared, the ingredients of which are not within my reach. Without such taper the scroll is of no avail."

"Say no more!" cried the little Gallego. "I have such a taper at hand and will bring it here in a moment." So saying he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of a yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandalwood.

The Moor felt it, and smelt of it. "Here are rare and costly perfumes," said he, "combined with this yellow wax. This is the kind of taper specified in the scroll. While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open; woe to him, however, who lingers within until it be extinguished. He will remain enchanted with the treasure."

It was now agreed between them to try the charm that

very night. At a late hour, therefore, when nothing was stirring but bats and owls, they ascended the woody hill of the Alhambra, and approached that awful tower, shrouded by trees and rendered formidable by so many traditionary tales.

By the light of a lantern they groped their way through bushes and over fallen stones, to the door of a vault beneath the tower. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber, damp and drear, from which another flight of steps led to a deeper vault. In this way they descended four several flights, leading into as many vaults, one below the other, but the floor of the fourth was solid, and though, according to tradition, there remained three vaults still below, it was said to be impossible to penetrate further, the residue being shut up by strong enchantment. The air of this vault was damp and chilly, and had an earthy smell, and the light scarce cast forth any rays. They paused here for a time in breathless suspense, until they faintly heard the clock of the watch-tower strike midnight; upon this they lit the waxen taper, which diffused an odor of myrrh, and frankincense, and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished, when there was a noise as of subterraneous thunder. The earth shook, and the floor yawning open disclosed a flight of steps. Trembling with awe they descended, and by the light of the lantern found themselves in another vault covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the center stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor in armor, but motionless as a statue, being controlled by the power of the incantation. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth handfuls of broad yellow pieces of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal, while occasionally a necklace of Oriental pearl would stick to their fingers. Still they trembled and breathed short while cramming their pockets with the spoils; and cast many a fearful glance at the two enchanted Moors who sat grim and motionless, glaring upon them with

unwinking eyes. At length, struck with a sudden panic at some fancied noise, they both rushed up the staircase, tumbled over one another into the upper apartment, overturned and extinguished the waxen taper, and the pavement again closed with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay they did not pause until they had groped their way out of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then seating themselves upon the grass, they divided the spoil, determining to content themselves for the present with this mere skimming of the jars, but to return on some future night and drain them to the bottom. To make sure of each other's good faith, also, they divided the talismans between them, one retaining the scroll and the other the taper; this done, they set off with light hearts and well-lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water-carrier.

"Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the Alcalde we are undone!"

"Certainly!" replied the Gallego; "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and I make no doubt can keep a secret; but—you have a wife——"

"She shall not know a word of it!" replied the little water-carrier sturdily.

"Enough," said the Moor, "I depend upon thy discretion and thy promise."

Never was promise more positive and sincere; but alas! what man can keep a secret from his wife? Certainly not such a one as Peregil the water-carrier, who was one of the most loving and tractable of husbands. On his return home he found his wife moping in a corner.

"Mighty well!" cried she, as he entered; "you've come at last, after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor as a housemate." Then bursting into tears she began to wring her hands and smite her breast. "Unhappy woman that I am!" exclaimed she, "what will become of

me! My house stripped and plundered by lawyers and alguazils; my husband a do-no-good that no longer brings home bread for his family, but goes rambling about, day and night, with infidel Moors. Oh, my children! my children! what will become of us; we shall all have to beg in the streets!"

Honest Peregil was so moved by the distress of his spouse that he could not help whimpering also. His heart was as full as his pocket, and not to be restrained. Thrusting his hand into the latter he hauled forth three or four broad gold pieces and slipped them into her bosom. The poor woman stared with astonishment, and could not understand the meaning of this golden shower. Before she could recover her surprise the little Gallego drew forth a chain of gold and dangled it before her, capering with exultation, his mouth distended from ear to ear.

"Holy Virgin protect us!" exclaimed the wife. "What hast thou been doing, Peregil? Surely thou has not been committing murder and robbery!"

The idea scarce entered the brain of the poor woman than it became a certainty with her. She saw a prison and a gallows in the distance, and a little bandy-legged Gallego dangling pendant from it; and overcome by the horrors conjured up by her imagination, fell into violent hysterics.

What could the poor man do? He had no other means of pacifying his wife and dispelling the phantoms of her fancy than by relating the whole story of his good fortune. This, however, he did not do until he had exacted from her the most solemn promise to keep it a profound secret from every living being.

To describe her joy would be impossible. She flung her arms round the neck of her husband, and almost strangled him with her caresses. "Now, wife!" exclaimed the little man with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow creature in distress."

The honest Gallego retired to his sheepskin mat, and slept as soundly as if on a bed of down. Not so his wife. She emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat and sat all night counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on necklaces and earrings, and fancying the

figure she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches.

On the following morning the honest Gallego took a broad golden coin, and repaired with it to a jeweler's shop in the Zacatin to offer it for sale, pretending to have found it among the ruins of the Alhambra. The jeweler saw that it had an Arabic inscription and was of the purest gold; he offered, however, but a third of its value, with which the water-carrier was perfectly content. Peregil now bought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, together with ample provisions for a hearty meal, and returning to his dwelling set all his children dancing around him, while he capered in the midst, the happiest of fathers.

The wife of the water-carrier kept her promise of secrecy with surprising strictness. For a whole day and a half she went about with a look of mystery and a heart swelling almost to bursting, yet she held her peace, though surrounded by her gossips. It is true she could not help giving herself a few airs, apologized for her ragged dress, and talked of ordering a new basquina all trimmed with gold lace and bugles, and a new lace mantilla. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water-carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health. In fact she thought they should all retire to the country for the summer, that the children might have the benefit of the mountain air, for there was no living in the city in this sultry season.

The neighbors stared at each other, and thought the poor woman had lost her wits, and her airs and graces and elegant pretensions were the theme of universal scoffing and merriment among her friends, the moment her back was turned.

If she restrained herself abroad, however, she indemnified herself at home, and putting a string of rich Oriental pearls round her neck, Moorish bracelets on her arms, an aigrette of diamonds on her head, sailed backward and forward in her slattern rags about the room, now and then stopping to admire herself in a piece of broken mirror. Nay, in the impulse of her simple vanity, she could not resist on one occasion showing herself at the window, to enjoy the effect of her finery on the passers-by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the meddling barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his shop on the opposite side of the street, when his ever watchful eye caught the sparkle of a diamond. In an instant he was at his loophole reconnoitering the slattern spouse of the water-carrier, decorated with the splendor of an Eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate inventory of her ornaments than he posted off with all speed to the Alcalde. In a little while the hungry alguazil was again on the scent, and before the day was over the unfortunate Peregil was again dragged into the presence of the judge.

“How is this, villain!” cried the Alcalde in a furious voice. “You told me that the infidel who died in your house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with pearls and diamonds. Wretch that thou art! prepare to render up the spoils of thy miserable victim, and to swing on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for thee.”

The terrified water-carrier fell on his knees, and made a full relation of the marvelous manner in which he had gained his wealth. The Alcalde, the alguazil, and the inquisitive barber listened with greedy ears to this Arabian tale of enchanted treasure. The alguazil was dispatched to bring the Moor who had assisted in the incantation. The Moslem entered half-frightened out of his wits at finding himself in the hands of the harpies of the law. When he beheld the water-carrier standing with sheepish look and downcast countenance, he comprehended the whole matter. “Miserable animal,” said he as he passed near him, “did I not warn thee against babbling to thy wife?”

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of his colleague; but the Alcalde affected to be slow of belief, and threw out menaces of imprisonment and rigorous investigation.

“Softly, good Señor Alcalde,” said the Mussulman, who by this time had recovered his usual shrewdness and self-possession. “Let us not mar fortune’s favors in the scramble for them. Nobody knows anything of this matter but ourselves; let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a

fair division, and all shall be produced; refuse, and the caves hall remain forever closed."

The Alcalde consulted apart with the alguazil. The latter was an old fox in his profession. "Promise anything," said he, "until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if he and his accomplice dare to murmur, threaten them with the fagot and the stake as infidels and scorceners."

The Alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow and turning to the Moor—"This is a strange story," said he, "and may be true, but I must have ocular proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we will share it amicably between us, and say nothing further of the matter; if ye have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands. In the meantime you must remain in custody."

The Moor and the water-carrier cheerfully agreed to these conditions, satisfied that the event would prove the truth of their words.

Toward midnight the Alcalde sallied forth secretly, attended by the alguazil and the meddlesome barber, all strongly armed. They conducted the Moor and the water-carrier as prisoners, and were provided with the stout donkey of the latter, to bear off the expected treasure. They arrived at the tower without being observed, and tying the donkey to a fig-tree, descended into the fourth vault of the tower.

The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled as before, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The Alcalde, the alguazil, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water-carrier entered the lower vault and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars filled with golden coin and precious stones. The water-carrier bore them up one by one upon his shoulders, but though a strong-backed little man, and accustomed to carry burdens, he staggered beneath their weight, and found, when slung on each side of his donkey, they were as much as the animal could bear.

"Let us be content for the present," said the Moor; "here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being perceived, and enough to make us all wealthy to our heart's desire."

"Is there more treasure remaining behind?" demanded the Alcalde.

"The greatest prize of all," said the Moor; "a huge coffer, bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones."

"Let us have up the coffer by all means," cried the grasping Alcalde.

"I will descend for no more," said the Moor doggedly. "Enough is enough for a reasonable man; more is superfluous."

"And I," said the water-carrier, "will bring up no further burden to break the back of my poor donkey."

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the Alcalde turned to his two adherents. "Aid me," said he, "to bring up the coffer, and its contents shall be divided between us." So saying he descended the steps, followed, with trembling reluctance, by the alguazil and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he extinguished the yellow taper: the pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three worthies remained buried in its womb.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the open air. The little water-carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What hast thou done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The Alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault!"

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor devoutly.

"And will you not release them?" demanded the Gallego.

"Allah forbid!" replied the Moor, smoothing his beard. "It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until some future adventurer shall come to break the charm. The will of God be done!" So saying he hurled the end of the waxen taper far among the gloomy thickets of the glen.

There was now no remedy, so the Moor and the water-carrier proceeded with the richly laden donkey toward

the city; nor could honest Peregil refrain from hugging and kissing his long-eared fellow-laborer, thus restored to him from the clutches of the law; and, in fact, it is doubtful which gave the simple-hearted little man most joy at the moment, the gaining of the treasure or the recovery of the donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil amicably and fairly, excepting that the Moor, who had a little taste for trinketry, made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones, and other baubles, but then he always gave the water-carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massy gold four times the size, with which the latter was heartily content. They took care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned into Africa, to his native city of Tetuan, and the Gallego, with his wife, his children and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here, under the admonition and tuition of his wife, he became a personage of some consequence, for she made the little man array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side; and, laying aside the familiar appellation of Peregil, assume the more sonorous title of Don Pedro Gil. His progeny grew up a thriving and merry-hearted, though short and bandy-legged generation; while the Señora Gil, be-fringed, be-laced, and be-tasseled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of slattern fashion and finery.

As to the Alcalde and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great tower of the Seven Floors, and there they remain spellbound at the present day. Whenever there shall be a lack in Spain of pimping barbers, sharking alguazils, and corrupt Alcaldes, they may be sought after; but if they have to wait until such time for their deliverance, there is danger of their enchantment enduring until doomsday.

VISITORS TO THE ALHAMBRA.

It is now nearly three months since I took up my abode in the Alhambra, during which time the progress

of the season has wrought many changes. When I first arrived everything was in the freshness of May; the foliage of the trees was still tender and transparent; the pomegranate had not yet shed its brilliant crimson blossoms; the orchards of the Xenil and the Darro were in full bloom; the rocks were hung with wild flowers, and Granada seemed completely surrounded by a wilderness of roses, among which innumerable nightingales sang, not merely in the night, but all day long.

The advance of summer has withered the rose and silenced the nightingale, and the distant country begins to look parched and sunburnt; though a perennial verdure reigns immediately round the city, and in the deep narrow valleys at the foot of the snow-capped mountains.

The Alhambra possesses retreats graduated to the heat of the weather, among which the most peculiar is the almost subterranean apartment of the baths. This still retains its ancient Oriental character, though stamped with the touching traces of decline. At the entrance, opening into a small court formerly adorned with flowers, is a hall, moderate in size, but light and graceful in architecture. It is overlooked by a small gallery supported by marble pillars and moresco arches. An alabaster fountain in the center of the pavement still throws up a jet of water to cool the place. On each side are deep alcoves with raised platforms, where the bathers after their ablutions reclined on luxurious cushions, soothed to voluptuous repose by the fragrance of the perfumed air and the notes of soft music from the gallery. Beyond this hall are the interior chambers, still more private and retired, where no light is admitted but through small apertures in the vaulted ceilings. Here was the *sanctum sanctorum* of female privacy, where the beauties of the harem indulged in the luxury of the baths. A soft mysterious light reigns through the place, the broken baths are still there, and traces of ancient elegance.

The prevailing silence and obscurity have made this a favorite resort of bats, who nestle during the day in the dark nooks and corners, and, on being disturbed, flit mysteriously about the twilight chambers, heightening in an indescribable degree their air of desertion and decay.

In this cool and elegant though dilapidated retreat, which has the freshness and seclusion of a grotto, I have of late passed the sultry hours of the day; emerging toward sunset, and bathing, or rather swimming, at night in the great reservoir of the main court. In this way I have been enabled in a measure to counteract the relaxing and enervating influence of the climate.

My dream of absolute sovereignty, however, is at an end: I was roused from it lately by the report of fire-arms, which reverberated among the towers as if the castle had been taken by surprise. On sallying forth I found an old cavalier with a number of domestics in possession of the hall of Ambassadors. He was an ancient count, who had come up from his palace in Granada to pass a short time in the Alhambra for the benefit of purer air, and who, being a veteran and inveterate sportsman, was endeavoring to get an appetite for his breakfast by shooting at swallows from the balconies. It was a harmless amusement, for though, by the alertness of his attendants in loading his pieces, he was enabled to keep up a brisk fire, I could not accuse him of the death of a single swallow. Nay, the birds themselves seemed to enjoy the sport, and to deride his want of skill, skimming in circles close to the balconies, and twittering as they darted by.

The arrival of this old gentleman has in some measure changed the aspect of affairs, but has likewise afforded matter for agreeable speculation. We have tacitly shared the empire between us, like the last kings of Granada, excepting that we maintain a most amicable alliance. He reigns absolute over the Court of the Lions and its adjacent halls, while I maintain peaceful possession of the region of the baths and the little garden of Lindaraxa. We take our meals together under the arcades of the court, where the fountains cool the air, and bubbling rills run along the channels of the marble pavement.

In the evening a domestic circle gathers about the worthy old cavalier. The countess comes up from the city with a favorite daughter about sixteen years of age. Then there are the official dependants of the court, his chaplain, his lawyer, his secretary, his steward, and others officers and agents of his extensive possessions. Thus he holds a kind of domestic court, where every

person seeks to contribute to his amusement, without sacrificing his own pleasure or self-respect. In fact, whatever may be said of Spanish pride, it certainly does not enter into social or domestic life. Among no people are the relations between kindred more cordial, or between superior and dependant more frank and genial; in these respects there still remains, in the provincial life of Spain, much of the vaunted simplicity of the olden times.

The most interesting member of this family group, however, is the daughter of the count, the charming though almost infantile little Carmen. Her form has not yet attained its maturity, but has already the exquisite symmetry and pliant grace so prevalent in this country. Her blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair are unusual in Andalusia, and give a mildness and gentleness to her demeanor, in contrast to the usual fire of Spanish beauty, but in perfect unison with the guileless and confiding innocence of her manners. She has, however, all the innate aptness and versatility of her fascinating country women, and sings, dances, and plays the guitar and other instruments to admiration. A few days after taking up his residence in the Alhambra, the count gave a domestic *fête* on his saint's day, assembling round him the members of his family and household, while several old servants came from his distant possessions to pay their reverence to him, and partake of the good cheer.

This patriarchal spirit which characterized the Spanish nobility in the days of their opulence has declined with their fortunes; but some who, like the count, still retain their ancient family possessions, keep up a little of the ancient system, and have their estates overrun and almost eaten up by generations of idle retainers. According to this magnificent old Spanish system, in which the national pride and generosity bore equal parts, a superannuated servant was never turned off, but became a charge for the rest of his days; nay, his children, and his children's children, and often their relations, to the right and left, became gradually entailed upon the family. Hence the huge palaces of the Spanish nobility, which have such an air of empty ostentation from the greatness of their size compared with the mediocrity and scantiness of their furniture, were absolutely required in the golden

days of Spain by the patriarchal habits of their possessors. They were little better than vast barracks for the hereditary generations of hangers-on that battened at the expense of a Spanish noble. The worthy count, who has estates in various parts of the kingdom, assures me that some of them barely feed the hordes of dependants nestled upon them; who consider themselves entitled to be maintained upon the place, rent free, because their forefathers have been so for generations.

The domestic *fête* of the count broke in upon the usual still life of the Alhambra. Music and laughter resounded through its late silent halls; there were groups of the guests amusing themselves about the galleries and gardens, and officious servants from town hurrying through the courts, bearing viands to the ancient kitchen, which was again alive with the tread of cooks and scullions, and blazed with unwonted fires.

The feast, for a Spanish set dinner is literally a feast, was laid in the beautiful moresco hall called "la sala de las dos Hermanas" (the saloon of the two sisters); the table groaned with abundance, and a joyous conviviality prevailed round the board; for though the Spaniards are generally an abstemious people, they are complete revelers at a banquet.

For my own part, there was something peculiarly interesting in thus sitting at a feast in the royal halls of the Alhambra, given by the representative of one of its most renowned conquerors; for the venerable count, though unwarlike himself, is the lineal descendant and representative of the "Great Captain" the illustrious Gonsalvo of Cordova, whose sword he guards in the archives of his palace at Granada.

The banquet ended, the company adjourned to the hall of Ambassadors. Here every one contributed to the general amusement by exerting some peculiar talent, singing, improvising, telling wonderful tales, or dancing to that all-pervading talisman of Spanish pleasure, the guitar.

The life and charm of the whole assemblage, however, was the gifted little Carmen. She took her part in two or three scenes from Spanish comedies, exhibiting a charming dramatic talent; she gave imitations of the popular Italian singers, with singular and whimsical

felicity and a rare quality of voice; she imitated the dialects, dances and ballads of the gypsies and the neighboring peasantry, but did everything with a facility, a neatness, a grace, and an all-pervading prettiness, that were perfectly fascinating. The great charm of her performances, however, was their being free from all pretension or ambition of display. She seemed unconscious of the extent of her own talents, and in fact is accustomed only to exert them casually, like a child, for the amusement of the domestic circle. Her observation and tact must be remarkably quick, for her life is passed in the bosom of her family, and she can only have had casual and transient glances at the various characters and traits brought out impromptu in moments of domestic hilarity, like the one in question. It is pleasing to see the fondness and admiration with which every one of the household regards her: she is never spoken of, even by the domestics, by any other appellation than that of *La Niña*, "the child," an appellation which thus applied has something peculiarly kind and endearing in the Spanish language.

Never shall I think of the Alhambra without remembering the lovely little Carmen sporting in happy and innocent girlhood in its marble halls, dancing to the sound of the Moorish castanets or mingling the silver warbling of her voice with the music of the fountains.

On this festive occasion several curious and amusing legends and traditions were told, many of which have escaped my memory; but of those that most struck me, I will endeavor to shape forth some entertainment for the reader.

LEGEND OF PRINCE AHMED AL KAMEL;

OR,

THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

THERE was once a Moorish king of Granada who had but one son, whom he named Ahmed, to which his courtiers added the surname of *al Kamel*, or the perfect, from the indubitable signs of superexcellence which they perceived in him in his very infancy. The astrologers countenanced them in their foresight, predicting every-

thing in his favor that could make a perfect prince and a prosperous sovereign. One cloud only rested upon his destiny, and even that was of a roseate hue. He would be of an amorous temperament, and run great perils from the tender passion. If, however, he could be kept from the allurements of love until of mature age, these dangers would be averted and his life thereafter be one uninterrupted course of felicity.

To prevent all danger of the kind the king wisely determined to rear the prince in a seclusion, where he should never see a female face nor hear even the name of love. For this purpose he built a beautiful palace on the brow of a hill above the Alhambra, in the midst of delightful gardens, but surrounded by lofty walls; being, in fact, the same palace known at the present day by the name of the Generaliffe. In this palace the youthful prince was shut up and intrusted to the guardianship and instruction of Ebon Bonabbon, one of the wisest and dryest of Arabian sages, who had passed the greatest part of his life in Egypt, studying hieroglyphics and making researches among the tombs and pyramids, and who saw more charms in an Egyptian mummy than in the most tempting of living beauties. The sage was ordered to instruct the prince in all kinds of knowledge but one—he is to be kept utterly ignorant of love—“use every precaution for the purpose you may think proper,” said the king, “but remember, O Ebon Bonabbon, if my son learns aught of that forbidden knowledge, while under your care, your head shall answer for it.” A withered smile came over the dry visage of the wise Bonabbon at the menace. “Let your majesty’s heart be as easy about your son as mine is about my head. Am I a man likely to give lessons in the idle passion?”

Under the vigilant care of the philosopher the prince grew up in the seclusion of the palace and its gardens. He had black slaves to attend upon him—hideous mutes, who knew nothing of love, or if they did, had not words to communicate it. His mental endowments were the peculiar care of Ebon Bonabbon, who sought to initiate him into the abstruse lore of Egypt, but in this the prince made little progress, and it was soon evident that he had no turn for philosophy.

He was, however, amazingly ductile for a youthful

prince; ready to follow any advice and always guided by the last counselor. He suppressed his yawns, and listened patiently to the long and learned discourses of Ebon Bonabbon, from which he imbibed a smattering of various kinds of knowledge, and thus happily attained his twentieth year, a miracle of princely wisdom, but totally ignorant of love.

About this time, however, a change came over the conduct of the prince. He completely abandoned his studies and took to strolling about the gardens and musing by the side of the fountains. He had been taught a little music among his various accomplishments; it now engrossed a great part of his time, and a turn for poetry became apparent. The sage Ebon Bonabbon took the alarm, and endeavored to work these idle humors out of him by a severe course of algebra; but the prince turned from it with distaste. "I cannot endure algebra," said he; "it is an abomination to me. I want something that speaks more to the heart."

The sage Ebon Bonabbon shook his dry head at the words. "Here's an end to philosophy," thought he. "The prince has discovered he has a heart!" He now kept anxious watch upon his pupil, and saw that the latent tenderness of his nature was in activity, and only wanted an object. He wandered about the gardens of the Generaliffe in an intoxication of feelings of which he knew not the cause. Sometimes he would sit plunged in a delicious reverie; then he would seize his lute and draw from it the most touching notes, and then throw it aside, and break forth into sighs and ejaculations.

By degrees this loving disposition began to extend to inanimate objects; he had his favorite flowers which he cherished with tender assiduity; then he became attached to various trees, and there was one in particular, of a graceful form and drooping foliage, on which he lavished his amorous devotion, carving his name on its bark, hanging garlands on its branches, and singing couplets in its praise, to the accompaniment of his lute.

The sage Ebon Bonabbon was alarmed at this excited state of his pupil. He saw him on the very brink of forbidden knowledge—the least hint might reveal to him the fatal secret. Trembling for the safety of the prince, and the security of his own head, he hastened to draw

him from the seductions of the garden, and shut him up in the highest tower of the Generaliffe. It contained beautiful apartments, and commanded an almost boundless prospect, but was elevated far above that atmosphere of sweets and those witching bowers so dangerous to the feelings of the too susceptible Ahmed.

What was to be done, however, to reconcile him to this restraint and to beguile the tedious hours? He had exhausted almost all kinds of agreeable knowledge; and algebra was not to be mentioned. Fortunately Ebon Bonabbon had been instructed, when in Egypt, in the language of birds by a Jewish rabbi, who had received it in lineal transmission from Solomon the Wise, who had been taught it by the Queen of Sheba. At the very mention of such a study the eyes of the prince sparkled with animation, and he applied himself to it with such avidity that he soon became as great an adept as his master.

The tower of the Generaliffe was no longer a solitude; he had companions at hand with whom he could converse. The first acquaintance he formed was with a hawk who had built his nest in a crevice of the lofty battlements, from whence he soared far and wide in quest of prey. The prince, however, found little to like or esteem in him. He was a mere pirate of the air, swaggering and boastful, whose talk was all about rapine, and carnage, and desperate exploits.

His next acquaintance was an owl, a mighty wise-looking bird, with a large head and staring eyes, who sat blinking and goggling all day in a hole in the wall, but roamed forth at night. He had great pretensions to wisdom; talked something of astrology and the moon, and hinted at the dark sciences, but he was grievously given to metaphysics, and the prince found his prosings were more ponderous than those of the sage Ebon Bonabbon.

Then there was a bat that hung all day by his heels in the dark corner of a vault, but sallied out in a slipshod style at twilight. He, however, had but twilight ideas on all subjects, derided things of which he had taken but an imperfect view, and seemed to take delight in nothing.

Besides these there was a swallow, with whom the prince was at first much taken. He was a smart talker, but restless, bustling, and forever on the wing, seldom

remaining long enough for any continued conversation. He turned out in the end to be a mere smatterer, who did but skim over the surface of things, pretending to know everything, but knowing nothing thoroughly.

These were the only feathered associates with whom the prince had any opportunity of exercising his newly acquired language; the tower was too high for any other birds to frequent it. He soon grew weary of his new acquaintances, whose conversation spake so little to the head and nothing to the heart, and gradually relapsed into his loneliness. A winter passed away, spring opened with all its bloom, and verdure, and breathing sweetness, and the happy time arrived for birds to pair and build their nests. Suddenly, as it were, a universal burst of song and melody broke forth from the groves and gardens of the Generalife, and reached the prince in the solitude of his tower. From every side he heard the same universal theme—love—love—love—chanted forth and responded to in every variety of note and tone. The prince listened in silence and perplexity. "What can be this love," thought he, "of which the world seems so full, and of which I know nothing?" He applied for information to his friend the hawk. The ruffian bird answered in a tone of scorn—"You must apply," said he, "to the vulgar, peaceable birds of earth, who are made for the prey of us princes of the air. My trade is war, and fighting my delight. In a word, I am a warrior, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince turned from him with disgust, and sought the owl in his retreat. "This is a bird," said he, "of peaceful habits, and may be able to solve my question." So he asked the owl to tell him what was this love about which all the birds in the groves below were singing.

Upon this the owl put on a look of offended dignity. "My nights," said he, "are taken up in study and research and my days in ruminating in myself upon all that I have learned. As to these singing birds of whom you talk I never listen to them. I despise them and their themes. Allah be praised, I cannot sing. In a word, I am a philosopher, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince now repaired to the vault where his friend the bat was hanging by the heels, and propounded the

same question. The bat wrinkled up his nose into a most snappish expression. "Why do you disturb me in my morning's nap with such an idle question?" said he peevishly. "I only fly by twilight when all birds are asleep, and never trouble myself with their concerns. I am neither bird nor beast, and I thank Heaven for it. I have found out the villainy of the whole of them, and hate them, one and all. In a word, I am a misanthrope, and know nothing of this thing called love."

As a last resort, the prince now sought the swallow, and stopped him just as he was circling about the summit of the tower. The swallow as usual was in a prodigious hurry, and had scarce time to make a reply. "Upon my word," said he, "I have so much public business to attend to, and so many pursuits to follow, that I have had no time to think on the subject. I have every day a thousand visits to pay, a thousand affairs of importance to examine into, that leave me not a moment of leisure for these little sing-song matters. In a word, I am a citizen of the world. I know nothing of this thing called love." So saying, the swallow dived into the valley and was out of sight in a moment.

The prince remained disappointed and perplexed, but with his curiosity still more piqued by the difficulty of gratifying it. While in this mood his ancient guardian entered the tower. The prince advanced eagerly to meet him. "O sage Ebon Bonabbon," cried he, "thou hast revealed to me much of the wisdom of the earth, but there is one thing of which I remain in utter ignorance, and would fain be informed."

"My prince has but to make the inquiry and everything within the limited range of his servant's intellect is at his command."

"Tell me then, O most profound of sages, what is the nature of this thing called love?"

The sage Ebon Bonabbon was struck as with a thunderbolt. He trembled and turned pale, and felt as if his head sat but loosely on his shoulders.

"What could suggest such a question to my prince? where could he have learned so idle a word?"

The prince led him to the window of the tower. "Listen, O Ebon Bonabbon!" said he. The sage listened. The nightingale sat in a thicket below the tower singing

to his paramour, the rose; from every blossomed spray and tufted grove arose a strain of melody, and love—love—love was still the unvarying theme. "Allah Achbar! God is great!" exclaimed the wise Bonabbon. "Who shall pretend to keep this secret from the hearts of men when even the birds of the air conspire to betray it?"

Then turning to Ahmed, "Oh, my prince," cried he, "shut thine ears to these seductive strains. Close thy mind against this dangerous knowledge. Know that this love is the cause of half the ills of wretched mortality. It is this which produces bitterness of strife between brethren and friends; which causes treacherous murder and desolating war. Care and sorrow, weary days and sleepless nights are its attendants. It withers the bloom and blights the joys of youth, and brings on the ills and griefs of premature old age. Allah preserve thee, my prince, in total ignorance of this thing called love!"

The sage Ebon Bonabbon hastily retired, leaving the prince plunged in still deeper perplexity. It was in vain he attempted to dismiss the subject from his mind; it still continued uppermost in his thoughts, and teased and exhausted him with vain conjectures. "Surely," said he to himself as he listened to the tuneful strains of the birds, "there is no sorrow in these notes: everything seems tenderness and joy. If love be a cause of such wretchedness and strife, why are not those birds drooping in solitude or tearing each other in pieces, instead of fluttering cheerfully about the groves or sporting with each other among the flowers?"

He lay one morning on his couch meditating on this inexplicable matter. The window of his chamber was open to admit the soft morning breeze which came laden with the perfume of orange blossoms from the valley of the Darro. The voice of the nightingale was faintly heard, still chanting the wonted theme. As the prince was listening and sighing, there was a sudden rushing noise in the air; a beautiful dove, pursued by a hawk, darted in at the window and fell panting on the floor; while the pursuer, balked of his prey, soared off to the mountains.

The prince took up the gasping bird, smoothed its feathers, and nestled it in his bosom. When he had

soothed it by his caresses he put it in a golden cage, and offered it, with his own hands, the whitest and finest of wheat and the purest of water. The bird, however, refused food, and sat drooping and pining, and uttering piteous moans.

“What aileth thee?” said Ahmed. “Hast thou not everything thy heart can wish?”

“Alas, no!” replied the dove, “am I not separated from the partner of my heart—and that too in the happy spring-time—the very season of love?”

“Of love!” echoed Ahmed. “I pray thee, my pretty bird, canst thou then tell me what is love?”

“Too well can I, my prince. It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is a charm which draws two beings together and unites them by delicious sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by these ties of tender affection?”

“I like my old teacher, Ebon Bonabbon, better than any other being; but he is often tedious, and I occasionally feel myself happier without his society.”

“That is not the sympathy I mean. I speak of love, the great mystery and principle of life, the intoxicating revel of youth, the sober delight of age. Look forth, my prince, and behold how at this blest season all nature is full of love. Every created being has its mate; the most insignificant bird sings to its paramour; the very beetle woos its lady beetle in the dust, and yon butterflies which you see fluttering high above the tower and toying in the air are happy in each other’s love. Alas, my prince! hast thou spent so many of the precious days of youth without knowing anything of love! Is there no gentle being of another sex, no beautiful princess or lovely damsel who has ensnared your heart, and filled your bosom with a soft tumult of pleasing pains and tender wishes?”

“I begin to understand!” said the prince, sighing. “Such a tumult I have more than once experienced without knowing the cause; and where should I seek for an object such as you describe in this dismal solitude?”

A little further conversation ensued, and the first amatory lesson of the prince was complete.

“Alas!” said he, “if love be indeed such a delight, and its interruption such a misery, Allah forbid that I should mar the joy of any of its votaries.” He opened the cage, took out the dove, and, having fondly kissed it, carried it to the window. “Go, happy bird,” said he, “rejoice with the partner of thy heart in the days of youth and spring-time. Why should I make thee a fellow prisoner in this dreary tower, where love can never enter?”

The dove flapped its wings in rapture, gave one vault into the air, and then swooped downward on whistling wings to the blooming bowers of the Darro.

The prince followed him with his eyes, and then gave way to bitter repining. The singing of the birds which once delighted him now added to his bitterness. Love! love! love! Alas, poor youth, he now understood the strain.

His eyes flashed fire when next he beheld the sage Bonabbon. “Why hast thou kept me in this abject ignorance?” cried he. “Why has the great mystery and principle of life been withheld from me, in which I find the meanest insect is so learned? Behold, all nature is in a revel of delight. Every created being rejoices with its mate. This—this is the love about which I have sought instruction; why am I alone debarred its enjoyment? why has so much of my youth been wasted without a knowledge of its rapture?”

The sage Bonabbon saw that all further reserve was useless, for the prince had acquired the dangerous and forbidden knowledge. He revealed to him, therefore, the predictions of the astrologers, and the precautions that had been taken in his education to avert the threatened evils. “And now, my prince,” added he, “my life is in your hands. Let the king your father discover that you have learned the passion of love while under my guardianship, and my head must answer for it.”

The prince was as reasonable as most young men of his age, and easily listened to the remonstrances of his tutor, since nothing pleaded against them. Besides, he really was attached to the sage Bonabbon, and being as yet but theoretically acquainted with the passion of love, he consented to confine the knowledge of it to his own bosom rather than endanger the head of the philosopher. His discretion was doomed, however, to be put to still

further proofs. A few mornings afterward, as he was ruminating on the battlements of the tower, the dove which had been released by him came hovering in the air, and alighted fearlessly upon his shoulder.

The prince fondled it to his breast. "Happy bird," said he, "who can fly, as it were, with the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the earth. Where hast thou been since we parted?"

"In a far country, my prince; from whence I bring you tidings in reward for my liberty. In the wide compass of my flight, which extends over plain and mountain, as I was soaring in the air I beheld below me a delightful garden with all kinds of fruits and flowers. It was in a green meadow on the banks of a meandering stream, and in the center of the garden was a stately palace. I alighted in one of the bowers to repose after my weary flight; on the green bank below me was a youthful princess in the very sweetness and bloom of her years. She was surrounded by female attendants, young like herself, who decked her with garlands and coronets of flowers; but no flower of field or garden could compare with her for loveliness. Here, however, she bloomed in secret, for the garden was surrounded by high walls, and no mortal man was permitted to enter. When I beheld this beauteous maid thus young and innocent, and unspotted by the world, I thought, here is the being formed by Heaven to inspire my prince with love."

The description was as a spark of fire to the combustible heart of Ahmed; all the latent amorousness of his temperament had at once found an object, and he conceived an immeasurable passion for the princess. He wrote a letter couched in the most impassioned language, breathing his fervent devotion, but bewailing the unhappy thralldom of his person, which prevented him from seeking her out, and throwing himself at her feet. He added couplets of the most tender and moving eloquence, for he was a poet by nature and inspired by love. He addressed his letter, "To the unknown beauty, from the captive Prince Ahmed," then perfuming it with musk and roses, he gave it to the dove.

"Away, trustiest of messengers," said he. "Fly over mountain, and valley, and river, and plain; rest not in bower nor set foot on earth, until thou hast given this letter to the mistress of my heart."

The dove soared high in air, and taking his course darted away in one undeviating direction. The prince followed him with his eye until he was a mere speck on a cloud, and gradually disappeared behind a mountain.

Day after day he watched for the return of the messenger of love; but he watched in vain. He began to accuse him of forgetfulness, when toward sunset one evening the faithful bird fluttered into his apartment, and falling at his feet expired. The arrow of some wanton archer had pierced his breast, yet he had struggled with the lingerings of life to execute his mission. As the prince bent with grief over this gentle martyr to fidelity he beheld a chain of pearls round his neck, attached to which, beneath his wing, was a small enameled picture. It represented a lovely princess in the very flower of her years. It was, doubtless, the unknown beauty of the garden; but who and where was she—how had she received his letter—and was this picture sent as a token of an approval of his passion? Unfortunately, the death of the faithful dove left everything in mystery and doubt.

The prince gazed on the picture till his eyes swam with tears. He pressed it to his lips and to his heart; he sat for hours contemplating it in an almost agony of tenderness. "Beautiful image!" said he. "Alas, thou art but an image. Yet thy dewy eyes beam tenderly upon me; those rosy lips look as though they would speak encouragement. Vain fancies! Have they not looked the same on some more happy rival? But where in this wide world shall I hope to find the original? Who knows what mountains, what realms may separate us? What adverse chance may intervene? Perhaps now, even now, lovers may be crowding around her, while I sit here, a prisoner in a tower, wasting my time in adoration of a painted shadow."

The resolution of Prince Ahmed was taken. "I will fly from this palace," said he, "which has become an odious prison, and, a pilgrim of love, will seek this unknown princess throughout the world."

To escape from the tower in the day, when every one was awake, might be a difficult matter; but at night the palace was slightly guarded, for no one apprehended any attempt of the kind from the prince, who had always

been so passive in his captivity. How was he to guide himself, however, in his darkling flight, being ignorant of the country? He bethought him of the owl, who was accustomed to roam at night, and must know every by-lane and secret pass. Seeking him in his hermitage, he questioned him touching his knowledge of the land. Upon this the owl put on a mighty self-important look.

"You must know, O prince," said he, "that we owls are of a very ancient and extensive family, though rather fallen to decay, and possess ruinous castles and palaces in all parts of Spain. There is scarcely a tower of the mountains, or fortress of the plains, or an old citadel of a city but has some brother, or uncle, or cousin quartered in it; and in going the rounds to visit these my numerous kindred I have pryed into every nook and corner, and made myself acquainted with every secret of the land."

The prince was overjoyed to find the owl so deeply versed in topography, and now informed him, in confidence, of his tender passion and his intended elopement, urging him to be his companion and counselor.

"Go to!" said the owl, with a look of displeasure. "Am I a bird to engage in a love affair—I whose whole time is devoted to meditation and the moon!"

"Be not offended, most solemn owl!" replied the prince. "Abstract thyself for a time from meditation and the moon, and aid me in my flight, and thou shalt have whatever heart can wish."

"I have that already," said the owl. "A few mice are sufficient for my frugal table, and this hole in the wall is spacious enough for my studies, and what more does a philosopher like myself desire?"

"Bethink thee, most wise owl, that while moping in thy cell and gazing at the moon all thy talents are lost to the world. I shall one day be a sovereign prince, and may advance thee to some post of honor and dignity."

The owl, though a philosopher and above the ordinary wants of life, was not above ambition, so he was finally prevailed upon to elope with the prince, and be his guide and mentor in his pilgrimage.

The plans of a lover are promptly executed. The prince collected all his jewels, and concealed them about his person as traveling funds. That very night he

lowered himself by his scarf from a balcony of the tower, clambered over the outer walls of the Generaliffe and, guided by the owl, made good his escape before morning to the mountains.

He now held a council with his mentor as to his future course.

“Might I advise,” said the owl, “I would recommend you to repair to Seville. You must know that many years since I was on a visit to an uncle, an owl of great dignity and power, who lived in a ruined wing of the Alcazar of that place. In my hoverings at night over the city I frequently remarked a light burning in a lonely tower. At length I alighted on the battlements, and found it to proceed from the lamp of an Arabian magician. He was surrounded by his magic books, and on his shoulder was perched his familiar, an ancient raven, who had come with him from Egypt. I became acquainted with that raven, and owe to him a great part of the knowledge I possess. The magician is since dead, but the raven still inhabits the tower, for these birds are of wonderful long life. I would advise you, O prince, to seek that raven, for he is a soothsayer and a conjuror, and deals in the black art, for which all ravens, and especially those of Egypt, are renowned.”

The prince was struck with the wisdom of this advice, and accordingly bent his course toward Seville. He traveled only in the night, to accommodate his companion, and lay by during the day in some dark cavern or moldering watch-tower, for the owl knew every hiding hole of the kind in the country, and had a most antiquarian taste for ruins.

At length, one morning at daybreak, they reached the city of Seville, where the owl, who hated the glare and bustle of crowded streets, halted without the gate, and took up his quarters in a hollow tree.

The prince entered the gate, and readily found the magic tower, which rose above the houses of the city as a palm-tree rises above the shrubs of the desert. It was, in fact, the same tower known at the present day as the Giralda, the famous Moorish tower of Seville.

The prince ascended by a great winding staircase to the summit of the tower, where he found the cabalistic raven, an old, mysterious, gray-headed bird, ragged in

feather, with a film over one eye that gave him the glare of a specter. He was perched on one leg, with his head turned on one side, and poring with his remaining eye on a diagram described on the pavement.

The prince approached him with the awe and reverence naturally inspired by his venerable appearance and supernatural wisdom. "Pardon me, most ancient and darkly wise raven," exclaimed he, "if for a moment I interrupt those studies which are the wonder of the world. You behold before you a votary of love, who would fain seek counsel how to obtain the object of his passion."

"In other words," said the raven, with a significant look, "you seek to try my skill in palmistry. Come, show me your hand, and let me decipher the mysterious lines of fortune."

"Excuse me," said the prince, "I come not to pry into the decrees of fate, which are hidden by Allah from the eyes of mortals. I am a pilgrim of love, and seek but to find a clew to the object of my pilgrimage."

"And can you be at any loss for an object in amorous Andalusia?" said the old raven, leering upon him with his single eye. "Above all, can you be at a loss in wanton Seville, where black-eyed damsels dance the zambra under every orange grove?"

The prince blushed, and was somewhat shocked at hearing an old bird, with one foot in the grave, talk thus loosely. "Believe me," said he gravely, "I am on none such light and vagrant errand as thou dost insinuate. The black-eyed damsels of Andalusia who dance among the orange groves of the Guadalquivir are as naught to me. I seek one unknown but immaculate beauty, the original of this picture, and I beseech thee, most potent raven, if it be within the scope of thy knowledge or the reach of thy art, inform me where she may be found."

The gray-headed raven was rebuked by the gravity of the prince. "What know I," replied he dryly, "of youth and beauty? My visits are to the old and withered, not the young and fair. The harbinger of fate am I, who croak bodings of death from the chimney top and flap my wings at the sick man's window. You must seek elsewhere for tidings of your unknown beauty."

"And where am I to seek, if not among the sons of wisdom, versed in the book of destiny? A royal prince

am I, fated by the stars, and sent on a mysterious enterprise, on which may hang the destiny of empires.”

When the raven heard that it was a matter of vast moment, in which the stars took interest, he changed his tone and manner, and listened with profound attention to the story of the prince. When it was concluded he replied, “Touching this princess, I can give thee no information of myself, for my flight is not among gardens or around ladies’ bowers; but hie thee to Cordova, seek the palm-tree of the great Abderahman, which stands in the court of the principal mosque; at the foot of it you will find a great traveler, who has visited all countries and courts, and been a favorite with queens and princesses. He will give you tidings of the object of your search.”

“Many thanks for this precious information,” said the prince. “Farewell, most venerable conjuror.”

“Farewell, pilgrim of love,” said the raven dryly, and again fell to pondering on the diagram.

The prince sallied forth from Seville, sought his fellow traveler the owl, who was still dozing in the hollow tree, and set off for Cordova.

He approached it along hanging gardens, and orange and citron groves overlooking the fair valley of the Guadalquivir. When arrived at its gates, the owl flew up to a dark hole in the wall, and the prince proceeded in quest of the palm-tree planted in days of yore by the great Abderahman. It stood in the midst of the great court of the mosque, towering from amid orange and cypress trees. Dervises and fakirs were seated in groups under the cloisters of the court, and many of the faithful were performing their ablutions at the fountains before entering the mosque.

At the foot of the palm-tree was a crowd listening to the words of one who appeared to be talking with great volubility. This, said the prince to himself, must be the great traveler who is to give me tidings of the unknown princess. He mingled in the crowd, but was astonished to perceive that they were all listening to a parrot, who, with his bright green coat, pragmatICAL eye, and consequential topknot, had the air of a bird on excellent terms with himself.

“How is this,” said the prince to one of the bystand-

ers, "that so many grave persons can be delighted with the garrulity of a chattering bird?"

"You know not of whom you speak," said the other; "this parrot is a descendant of the famous parrot of Persia, renowned for his story-telling talent. He has all the learning of the East at the tip of his tongue, and can quote poetry as fast as he can talk. He has visited various foreign courts where he has been considered an oracle of erudition. He has been a universal favorite also with the fair sex, who have a vast admiration for erudite parrots that can quote poetry."

"Enough," said the prince, "I will have some private talk with this distinguished traveler."

He sought a private interview, and expounded the nature of his errand. He had scarcely mentioned it when the parrot burst into a fit of dry rickety laughter that absolutely brought tears in his eyes. "Excuse my mirth," said he, "but the mere mention of love always sets me laughing."

The prince was shocked at this ill-timed merriment. "Is not love," said he, "the great mystery of nature—the secret principle of life—the universal bond of sympathy?"

"A fig's end!" cried the parrot, interrupting him. "Prithee where hast thou learnt this sentimental jargon? Trust me, love is quite out of vogue; one never hears of it in the company of wits and people of refinement."

The prince sighed as he recalled the different language of his friend the dove. But this parrot, thought he, has lived about court; he affects the wit and the fine gentleman; he knows nothing of the thing called love.

Unwilling to provoke any more ridicule of the sentiment which filled his heart, he now directed his inquiries to the immediate purport of his visit.

"Tell me," said he, "most accomplished parrot, thou who hast everywhere been admitted to the most secret bowers of beauty, hast thou in the course of thy travels met with the original of this portrait?"

The parrot took the picture in his claw, turned his head from side to side, and examined it curiously with either eye. "Upon my honor," said he, "a very pretty face; very pretty. But then one sees so many pretty women in one's travels that one can hardly—but hold—

bless me! now I look at it again—sure enough, this is the Princess Aldegonda: how could I forget one that is so prodigious a favorite with me?"

"The Princess Aldegonda!" echoed the prince, "and where is she to be found?"

"Softly—softly," said the parrot, "easier to be found than gained. She is the only daughter of the Christian king who reigns at Toledo, and is shut up from the world until her seventeenth birthday, on account of some prediction of those meddlesome fellows, the astrologers. You'll not get a sight of her, no mortal man can see her. I was admitted to her presence to entertain her, and I assure you, on the word of a parrot who has seen the world, I have conversed with much sillier princesses in my time."

"A word in confidence, my dear parrot," said the prince. "I am heir to a kingdom, and shall one day sit upon a throne. I see that you are a bird of parts and understood the word. Help me to gain possession of this princess and I will advance you to some distinguished post about court."

"With all my heart," said the parrot; "but let it be a sinecure if possible, for we wits have a great dislike to labor."

Arrangements were promptly made; the prince sallied forth from Cordova through the same gate by which he had entered; called the owl down from the hole in the wall, introduced him to his new traveling companion as a brother *savant*, and away they set off on their journey.

They traveled much more slowly than accorded with the impatience of the prince, but the parrot was accustomed to high life, and did not like to be disturbed early in the morning. The owl, on the other hand, was for sleeping at midday, and lost a great deal of time by his long siestas. His antiquarian taste also was in the way; for he insisted on pausing and inspecting every ruin, and had long legendary tales to tell about every old tower and castle in the country. The prince had supposed that he and the parrot, being both birds of learning, could delight in each other's society, but never had he been more mistaken. They were eternally bickering. The one was a wit, the other a philosopher. The parrot quoted poetry, was critical on new readings, and

eloquent on small points of erudition; the owl treated all such knowledge as trifling, and relished nothing but metaphysics. Then the parrot would sing songs and repeat *bon mots*, and crack jokes upon his solemn neighbor, and laugh outrageously at his own wit; all which the owl considered a grievous invasion of his dignity, and would scowl, and sulk, and swell, and sit silent for a whole day together.

The prince heeded not the wranglings of his companions, being wrapped up in the dreams of his own fancy and the contemplation of the portrait of the beautiful princess. In this way they journeyed through the stern passes of the Sierra Morena, across the sunburnt plains of La Mancha and Castile, and along the banks of the "Golden Tagus," which winds its wizard mazes over one-half of Spain and Portugal. At length they came in sight of a strong city with walls and towers, built on a rocky promontory, round the foot of which the Tagus circled with brawling violence. "Behold," exclaimed the owl, "the ancient and renowned city of Toledo; a city famous for its antiquities. Behold those venerable domes and towers, hoary with time, and clothed with legendary grandeur, in which so many of my ancestors have meditated——"

"Pish," cried the parrot, interrupting his solemn antiquarian rapture, "what have we to do with antiquities and legends, and your ancestors? Behold, what is more to the purpose, behold the abode of youth and beauty—behold, at length, O prince, the abode of your long-sought princess."

The prince looked in the direction indicated by the parrot, and beheld, in a delightful green meadow on the banks of the Tagus, a stately palace rising from amid the bowers of a delicious garden. It was just such a place as had been described by the dove as the residence of the original of the picture. He gazed at it with a throbbing heart: "Perhaps at this moment," thought he, "the beautiful princess is sporting beneath those shady bowers, or pacing with delicate step those stately terraces, or reposing beneath those lofty roofs!" As he looked more narrowly he perceived that the walls of the garden were of great height, so as to defy access, while numbers of armed guards patrolled around them.

The prince turned to the parrot. "O most accomplished of birds," said he, "thou hast the gift of human speech. Hie thee to yon garden; seek the idol of my soul, and tell her that Prince Ahmed, a pilgrim of love, and guided by the stars, has arrived in quest of her on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The parrot, proud of his embassy, flew away to the garden, mounted above its lofty walls, and, after soaring for a time over the lawns and groves, alighted on the balcony of a pavilion that overhung the river. Here, looking in at the casement, he beheld the princess reclining on a couch, with her eyes fixed on a paper, while tears gently stole after each other down her pallid cheek.

Pluming his wings for a moment, adjusting his bright green coat, and elevating his topknot, the parrot perched himself beside her with a gallant air; then assuming a tenderness of tone—

"Dry thy tears, most beautiful of princesses," said he, "I come to bring solace to thy heart."

The princess was startled on hearing a voice, but turning and seeing nothing but a little green-coated bird bobbing and bowing before her—"Alas! what solace canst thou yield," said she, "seeing thou art but a parrot?"

The parrot was nettled at the question. "I have consoled many beautiful ladies in my time," said he; "but let that pass. At present, I come ambassador from a royal prince. Know that Ahmed, the Prince of Granada, has arrived in quest of thee, and is encamped even now on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The eyes of the beautiful princess sparkled at these words, even brighter than the diamonds in her coronet. "O sweetest of parrots," cried she, "joyful indeed are thy tidings; for I was faint, and weary, and sick almost unto death, with doubt of the constancy of Ahmed. Hie thee back and tell him that the words of his letter are engraven in my heart, and his poetry has been the food of my soul. Tell him, however, that he must prepare to prove his love by force of arms; to-morrow is my seventeenth birthday, when the king, my father, holds a great tournament; several princes are to enter the lists, and my hand is to be the prize of the victor."

The parrot again took wing and, rustling through the

groves, flew back to where the prince awaited his return. The rapture of Ahmed on finding the original of his adored portrait, and finding her kind and true, can only be conceived by those favored mortals who have had the good fortune to realize daydreams and turn shadows into substance. Still there was one thing that alloyed his transport—this impending tournament. In fact, the banks of the Tagus were already glittering with arms and resounding with trumpets of the various knights, who with proud retinues were prancing on toward Toledo to attend the ceremonial. The same star that had controlled the destiny of the prince had governed that of the princess, and until her seventeenth birthday she had been shut up from the world, to guard her from the tender passion. The fame of her charms, however, had been enhanced rather than obscured by this seclusion. Several powerful princes had contended for her alliance, and her father, who was a king of wondrous shrewdness, to avoid making enemies by showing partiality, had referred them to the arbitrament of arms. Among the rival candidates were several renowned for strength and prowess. What a predicament for the unfortunate Ahmed, unprovided as he was with weapons, and unskilled in the exercises of chivalry! “Luckless prince that I am!” said he, “to have been brought up in seclusion, under the eye of a philosopher! of what avail are algebra and philosophy in affairs of love! alas, Ebon Bonabbon, why hast thou neglected to instruct me in the management of arms?” Upon this the owl broke silence, prefacing his harangue with a pious ejaculation, for he was a devout Mussulman:

“Allah Achbar! ‘God is great,’” exclaimed he, “in his hands are all secret things, He alone governs the destiny of princes! Know, O prince, that this land is full of mysteries, hidden from all but those who, like myself, can grope after knowledge in the dark. Know that in the neighboring mountains there is a cave, and in that cave there is an iron table, and on that table lies a suit of magic armor, and beside that table stands a spell-bound steed, which have been shut up there for many generations.”

The prince stared with wonder, while the owl, blinking his huge round eyes and erecting his horns, proceeded:

“Many years since I accompanied my father to these parts on a tour of his estates, and we sojourned in that cave, and thus became I acquainted with the mystery. It is a tradition in our family, which I have heard from my grandfather when I was yet but a very little owlet, that this armor belonged to a Moorish magician, who took refuge in this cavern when Toledo was captured by the Christians, and died here, leaving his steed and weapons under a mystic spell, never to be used but by a Moslem, and by him only from sunrise to midday. In that interval, whoever uses them will overthrow every opponent.”

“Enough, let us seek this cave,” exclaimed Ahmed.

Guided by his legendary mentor, the prince found the cavern, which was in one of the wildest recesses of those rocky cliffs which rose around Toledo; none but the mousing eye of an owl or an antiquary could have discovered the entrance to it. A sepulchral lamp of everlasting oil shed a solemn light through the place. On an iron table in the center of the cavern lay the magic armor, against it leaned the lance, and beside it stood an Arabian steed, caparisoned for the field, but motionless as a statue. The armor was bright and unsullied, as it had gleamed in days of old; the steed in as good condition as if just from the pasture, and when Ahmed laid his hand upon his neck, he pawed the ground and gave a loud neigh of joy that shook the walls of the cavern. Thus provided with horse to ride and weapon to wear, the prince determined to defy the field at the impending tourney.

The eventful morning arrived. The lists for the combat were prepared in the Vega or plain just below the cliff-built walls of Toledo. Here were erected stages and galleries for the spectators, covered with rich tapestry and sheltered from the sun by silken awnings. All the beauties of the land were assembled in those galleries, while below pranced plumed knights with their pages and esquires, among whom figured conspicuously the princes who were to contend in the tourney. All the beauties of the land, however, were eclipsed when the Princess Aldegonda appeared in the royal pavilion and for the first time broke forth upon the gaze of an admiring world. A murmur of wonder ran through the crowd

at her transcendent loveliness; and the princes who were candidates for her hand merely on the faith of her reported charms now felt tenfold ardor for the conflict.

The princess, however, had a troubled look. The color came and went from her cheek, and her eye wandered with a restless and unsatisfied expression over the plumed throng of knights. The trumpets were about sounding for the encounter when a herald announced the arrival of a stranger knight, and Ahmed rode into the field. A steeled helmet studded with gems rose above his turban; his cuirass was embossed with gold; his scimitar and dagger were of the workmanship of Fay, and flamed with precious stones. A round shield was at his shoulder, and in his hand he bore the lance of charmed virtue. The caparison of his Arabian was richly embroidered and swept the ground, and the proud animal pranced and snuffed the air, and neighed with joy at once more beholding the array of arms. The lofty and graceful demeanor of the prince struck every eye, and when his appellation was announced, "The pilgrim of love," a universal flutter and agitation prevailed among the fair dames in the galleries.

When Ahmed presented himself at the lists, however, they were closed against him; none but princes, he was told, were admitted to the contest. He declared his name and rank. Still worse, he was a Moslem, and could not engage in a tourney where the hand of a Christian princess was the prize.

The rival princes surrounded him with haughty and menacing aspects, and one of insolent demeanor and Herculean frame sneered at his light and youthful form, and scoffed at his amorous appellation. The ire of the prince was roused; he defied his rival to the encounter. They took distance, wheeled, and charged; at the first touch of the magic lance the brawny scoffer was tilted from his saddle. Here the prince would have paused, but alas! he had to deal with a demoniac horse and armor; once in action, nothing could control them. The Arabian steed charged into the thickest of the throng; the lance overturned everything that presented; the gentle prince was carried pellmell about the field, strewing it with high and low, gentle and simple, and grieving at his own involuntary exploits. The king stormed

and raged at this outrage on his subjects and his guests. He ordered out all his guards—they were unhorsed as fast as they came up. The king threw off his robes, grasped buckler and lance, and rode forth to awe the stranger with the presence of majesty itself. Alas, majesty fared no better than the vulgar; the steed and lance were no respecters of persons; to the dismay of Ahmed, he was borne full tilt against the king, and in a moment the royal heels were in the air, and the crown was rolling in the dust.

At this moment the sun reached the meridian; the magic spell resumed its power. The Arabian steed scoured across the plain, leaped the barrier, plunged into the Tagus, swam its raging current, bore the prince, breathless and amazed, to the cavern, and resumed his station like a statue beside the iron table. The prince dismounted right gladly, and replaced the armor, to abide the further decrees of fate. Then seating himself in the cavern, he ruminated on the desperate state to which this bedeviled steed and armor had reduced him. Never should he dare to show his face at Toledo, after inflicting such disgrace upon its chivalry, and such an outrage on its king. What, too, would the princess think of so rude and riotous an achievement! Full of anxiety, he sent forth his winged messengers to gather tidings. The parrot resorted to all the public places and crowded resorts of the city, and soon returned with a world of gossip. All Toledo was in consternation. The princess had been borne off senseless to the palace; the tournament had ended in confusion; every one was talking of the sudden apparition, prodigious exploits, and strange disappearance of the Moslem knight. Some pronounced him a Moorish magician; others thought him a demon who had assumed a human shape; while others related traditions of enchanted warriors hidden in the caves of the mountains, and thought it might be one of these, who had made a sudden irruption from his den. All agreed that no mere ordinary mortal could have wrought such wonders, or unhorsed such accomplished and stalwart Christian warriors.

The owl flew forth at night, and hovered about the dusky city, perching on the roofs and chimneys. He then wheeled his flight up to the royal palace, which

stood on the rocky summit of Toledo, and went prowling about its terraces and battlements, eavesdropping at every cranny, and glaring in with his big goggling eyes at every window where there was a light, so as to throw two or three maids of honor into fits. It was not until the gray dawn began to peer above the mountains that he returned from his mousing expedition, and related to the prince what he had seen.

“As I was prying about one of the loftiest towers of the palace,” said he, “I beheld through a casement a beautiful princess. She was reclining on a couch, with attendants and physicians around her, but she would none of their ministry and relief. When they retired I beheld her draw forth a letter from her bosom, and read, and kiss it, and give way to loud lamentations; at which, philosopher as I am, I could not but be greatly moved.”

The tender heart of Ahmed was distressed at these tidings. “Too true were thy words, O sage Ebon. Bon-abbon!” cried he. “Care and sorrow, and sleepless nights are the lot of lovers. Allah preserve the princess from the blighting influence of this thing called love.”

Further intelligence from Toledo corroborated the report of the owl. The city was a prey to uneasiness and alarm. The princess was conveyed to the highest tower of the palace, every avenue to which was strongly guarded. In the meantime, a devouring melancholy had seized upon her, of which no one could divine the cause. She refused food, and turned a deaf ear to every consolation. The most skillful physicians had essayed their art in vain; it was thought some magic spell had been practiced upon her, and the king made proclamation, declaring that whoever should effect her cure should receive the richest jewel in the royal treasury.

When the owl, who was dozing in a corner, heard of this proclamation, he rolled his large eyes and looked more mysterious than ever.

“Allah Achbar!” exclaimed he. “Happy the man that shall effect that cure, should he but know what to choose from the royal treasury.”

“What mean you, most reverend owl?” said Ahmed.

“Hearken, O prince, to what I shall relate. We owls, you must know, are a learned body, and much given to dark and dusty research. During my late prowling at

night about the domes and turrets of Toledo I discovered a college of antiquarian owls, who hold their meetings in a great vaulted tower where the royal treasure is deposited. Here they were discussing the forms and inscriptions and designs of ancient gems and jewels, and of golden and silver vessels, heaped up in the treasury, the fashion of every country and age; but mostly they were interested about certain reliques and talismans, that have remained in the treasury since the time of Roderick the Goth. Among these was a box of shittim wood, secured by bands of steel of Oriental workmanship, and inscribed with mystic characters known only to the learned few. This box and its inscription had occupied the college for several sessions, and had caused much long and grave dispute. At the time of my visit a very ancient owl, who had recently arrived from Egypt, was seated on the lid of the box lecturing upon the inscription, and proved from it that the coffer contained the silken carpet of the throne of Solomon the Wise: which doubtless had been brought to Toledo by the Jews, who took refuge there after the downfall of Jerusalem."

When the owl had concluded his antiquarian harangue the prince remained for a time absorbed in thought. "I have heard," said he, "from the sage Ebon Bonabbon, of the wonderful properties of that talisman, which disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem, and was supposed to be lost to mankind. Doubtless it remains a sealed mystery to the Christians of Toledo. If I can get possession of that carpet my fortune is secure."

The next day the prince laid aside his rich attire and arrayed himself in the simple garb of an Arab of the desert. He dyed his complexion to a tawny hue, and no one could have recognized in him the splendid warrior who had caused such admiration and dismay at the tournament. With staff in hand and scrip by his side, and a small pastoral reed, he repaired to Toledo, and presenting himself at the gate of the royal palace, announced himself as a candidate for the reward offered for the cure of the princess. The guards would have driven him away with blows: "What can a vagrant Arab like thyself pretend to do," said they, "in a case where the most learned of the land have failed?" The king, how-

ever, overheard the tumult, and ordered the Arab to be brought into his presence.

“Most potent king,” said Ahmed, “you behold before you a Bedouin Arab, the greater part of whose life has been passed in the solitudes of the desert. These solitudes, it is well known, are the haunts of demons and evil spirits, who beset us poor shepherds in our lonely watchings, enter into and possess our flocks and herds, and sometimes render even the patient camel furious. Against these, our countercharm is music; and we have legendary airs handed down from generation to generation, that we chant and pipe to cast forth these evil spirits. I am of a gifted line, and possess this power in its fullest force. If it be any evil influence of the kind that holds a spell over thy daughter, I pledge my head to free her from its sway.”

The king, who was a man of understanding and knew the wonderful secrets possessed by the Arabs, was inspired with hope by the confident language of the prince. He conducted him immediately to the lofty tower secured by several doors, in the summit of which was the chamber of the princess. The windows opened upon a terrace with balustrades, commanding a view over Toledo and all the surrounding country. The windows were darkened, for the princess lay within, a prey to a devouring grief that refused all alleviation.

The prince seated himself on the terrace, and performed several wild Arabian airs on his pastoral pipe, which he had learned from his attendants in the Generaliffe at Granada. The princess continued insensible, and the doctors, who were present, shook their heads, and smiled with incredibility and contempt. At length the prince laid aside the reed, and to a simple melody chanted the amatory verses of the letter which had declared his passion.

The princess recognized the strain. A fluttering joy stole to her heart; she raised her head and listened; tears rushed to her eyes and streamed down her cheeks; her bosom rose and fell with a tumult of emotions. She would have asked for the minstrel to be brought into her presence, but maiden coyness held her silent. The king read her wishes, and at his command Ahmed was conducted into the chamber. The lovers were discreet:

they but exchanged glances, yet those glances spoke volumes. Never was triumph of music more complete. The rose had returned to the soft cheek of the princess, the freshness to her lip, and the dewy light to her languishing eye.

All the physicians present stared at each other with astonishment. The king regarded the Arab minstrel with admiration, mixed with awe. "Wonderful youth," exclaimed he, "thou shalt henceforth be the first physician of my court, and no other prescription will I take but thy melody. For the present, receive thy reward, the most precious jewel in my treasury."

"O king," replied Ahmed, "I care not for silver, or gold, or precious stones. One relique hast thou in thy treasury, handed down from the Moslems who once owned Toledo. A box of sandalwood containing a silken carpet. Give me that box, and I am content."

All present were surprised at the moderation of the Arab, and still more, when the box of sandalwood was brought and the carpet drawn forth. It was of fine green silk, covered with Hebrew and Chaldaic characters. The court physicians looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and smiled at the simplicity of this new practitioner, who could be content with so paltry a fee.

"This carpet," said the prince, "once covered the throne of Solomon the Wise; it is worthy of being placed beneath the feet of beauty."

So saying, he spread it on the terrace beneath an ottoman that had been brought forth for the princess; then seating himself at her feet:

"Who," said he, "shall counteract what is written in the book of fate? Behold the prediction of the astrologers verified. Know, O king, that your daughter and I have long loved each other in secret. Behold in me the pilgrim of love."

These words were scarcely from his lips when the carpet rose in the air, bearing off the prince and princess. The king and the physicians gazed after it with open mouths and straining eyes, until it became a little speck on the white bosom of a cloud, and then disappeared in the blue vault of heaven.

The king in a rage summoned his treasurer. "How is this," said he, "that thou hast suffered an infidel to get possession of such a talisman?"

“Alas! sire, we knew not its nature, nor could we decipher the inscription of the box. If it be indeed the carpet of the throne of the wise Solomon, it is possessed of magic power, and can transport its owner from place to place through the air.”

The king assembled a mighty army, and set off for Granada in pursuit of the fugitives. His march was long and toilsome. Encamping in the Vega, he sent a herald to demand restitution of his daughter. The king himself came forth with all his court to meet him. In the king he beheld the Arab minstrel, for Ahmed had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and the beautiful Aldegonda was his sultana.

The Christian king was easily pacified, when he found that his daughter was suffered to continue in her faith; not that he was particularly pious; but religion is always a point of pride and etiquette with princes. Instead of bloody battles, there was a succession of feasts and rejoicings; after which, the king returned well pleased to Toledo, and the youthful couple continued to reign as happily as wisely in the Alhambra.

It is proper to add that the owl and the parrot had severally followed the prince by easy stages to Granada—the former traveling by night, and stopping at the various hereditary possessions of his family; the latter figuring in the gay circles of every town and city on his route.

Ahmed gratefully requited the services which they had rendered him on his pilgrimage. He appointed the owl his prime minister, the parrot his master of ceremonies. It is needless to say that never was a realm more sagely administered or a court conducted with more exact punctilio.

THE LEGEND OF THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA.

OR,

THE PAGE AND THE GERFALCON.

FOR some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors that delightful city was a frequent and favorite

residence of the Spanish sovereigns, until they were frightened away by successive shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down various houses and made the old Moslem towers rock to their foundation.

Many, many years then rolled away, during which Granada was rarely honored by a royal guest. The palaces of the nobility remained silent and shut up; and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat in mournful desolation among her neglected gardens. The tower of the Infantas, once the residence of the three beautiful Moorish princesses, partook of the general desolation; and the spider spun her web athwart the gilded vault, and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda. The neglect of the tower may partly have been owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbors. It was rumored that the spirit of the youthful Zorahayda, who had perished in that tower, was often seen by moonlight, seated beside the fountain in the hall or moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver lute would be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length the city of Granada was once more enlivened by the royal presence. All the world knows that Philip V. was the first Bourbon that swayed the Spanish scepter. All the world knows that he married, in second nuptials, Elizabetta or Isabella (for they are the same), the beautiful Princess of Parma; and all the world knows that, by this chain of contingencies, a French prince and an Italian princess were seated together on the Spanish throne. For the reception of this illustrious pair, the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted place. The clangor of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues and outer court, the glitter of arms and display of banners about barbican and battlement, recalled the ancient and warlike glories of the fortress. A softer spirit, however, reigned within the royal palace. There was the rustling of robes, and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of reverential courtiers about the antechambers; a loitering of pages and maids of honor about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favorite page of the queen, named Ruyz de Alarcon. To say that he was a favorite page of the queen, was at once to speak his eulogium, for every one in the suit of the stately Elizabetta was chosen for grace, and beauty, and accomplishments. He was just turned of eighteen, light and little of form, and graceful as a young Antinous. To the queen he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court, and experienced in the ways of women far beyond his years.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generaliffe, which overlook the grounds of the Alhambra. He had taken with him for his amusement a favorite gerfalcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles, seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made a swoop at his quarry, but missing it, soared away regardless of the calls of the page. The latter followed the truant bird with his eye in its capricious flight, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the royal fortress from the grounds of the Generaliffe. It was, in fact, the "tower of the Princesses."

The page descended into the ravine and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height rendered any attempt to scale it fruitless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls. A small garden inclosed by a trellis-work of reeds overhung with myrtle lay before the tower. Opening a wicket, the page passed between beds of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep into the interior. There was a small Moorish hall with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the center hung a gilt cage containing a singing bird: beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoise-shell cat among reels of silk and other articles of female labor, and a guitar, decorated with ribbons, leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste and elegance in a lonely and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of enchanted halls, current in the Alhambra; and the tortoise-shell cat might be some spell-bound princess.

He knocked gently at the door—a beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly withdrawn. He waited, expecting that the door would be opened; but he waited in vain: no footstep was to be heard within, all was silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while the beaming face once more peeped forth: it was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated in the most courteous accents to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

“I dare not open the door, señor,” replied the little damsel, blushing; “my aunt has forbidden it.”

“I do beseech you, fair maid; it is the favorite falcon of the queen; I dare not return to the palace without it.”

“Are you, then, one of the cavaliers of the court?”

“I am, fair maid; but I shall lose the queen’s favor and my place if I lose this hawk.”

“Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of the court that my aunt has charged me especially to bar the door.”

“Against wicked cavaliers, doubtless; but I am none of those, but a simple, harmless page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request.”

The heart of the little damsel was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely, too, he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described as a species of cannibal, ever on the prowl to make prey of thoughtless damsels; he was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming. The sly page saw that the garrison began to waver, and redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him; so the blushing little warder of the tower descended and opened the door with a trembling hand; and if the page had been charmed by a mere glimpse of her countenance from the window, he

was ravished by the full-length portrait now revealed to him.

Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquina set off the round but delicate symmetry of her form, which was as yet scarce verging into womanhood. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead with scrupulous exactness, and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the universal custom of the country.

It is true, her complexion was tinged by the ardor of a southern sun, but it served to give richness to the mantling bloom of her cheek, and to heighten the luster of her melting eyes. Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry; he merely murmured his acknowledgments, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon. He soon returned with the truant bird upon his fist. The damsel, in the meantime, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall, and was winding silk; but in her agitation she let fall the reel upon the pavement. The page sprang, picked it up, then dropping gracefully on one knee presented it to her, but seizing the hand extended to receive it, imprinted on it a kiss more fervent and devout than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

“Ave Maria! señor!” exclaimed the damsel, blushing still deeper with confusion and surprise, for never before had she received such a salutation.

The modest page made a thousand apologies, assuring her it was the way, at court, of expressing the most profound homage and respect.

Her anger, if anger she felt, was easily pacified; but her agitation and embarrassment continued, and she sat blushing deeper and deeper, with her eyes cast down upon her work, entangling the silk which she attempted to wind.

The cunning page saw the confusion in the opposite camp, and would fain have profited by it, but the fine speeches he would have uttered died upon his lips; his attempts at gallantry were awkward and ineffectual; and to his surprise, the adroit page who had figured with such grace and effrontery among the most knowing and experienced ladies of the court, found himself awed and abashed in the presence of a simple damsel of fifteen.

In fact, the artless maiden in her own modesty and innocence had guardians more effectual than the bolts and bars prescribed by her vigilant aunt. Still, where is the female bosom proof against the first whisperings of love? The little damsel, with all her artlessness, instinctively comprehended all that the faltering tongue of the page failed to express, and her heart was fluttered at beholding, for the first time, a lover at her feet—and such a lover!

The diffidence of the page, though genuine, was short-lived, and he was recovering his usual ease and confidence, when a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

“My aunt is returning from mass!” cried the damsel in affright. “I pray you, señor, depart.”

“Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance.”

She hastily untwisted the rose from her raven locks. “Take it,” cried she, agitated and blushing, “but pray begone.”

The page took the rose, and at the same time covered with kisses the fair hand that gave it. Then placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the vigilant aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall; but a word of explanation sufficed. “A gerfalcon had pursued his prey into the hall.”

“Mercy on us! To think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk? Why, the very bird in the cage is not safe.”

The vigilant Fredegonda was one of the most wary of ancient spinsters. She had a becoming terror and distrust of what she denominated “the opposite sex,” which had gradually increased through a long life of celibacy. Not that the good lady had ever suffered from their wiles, nature having set up a safeguard in her face that forbade all trespass upon her premises; but ladies who have least cause to fear for themselves are most ready to keep a watch over their more tempting neighbors. The niece was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had recently been transferred from her sacred asylum to the

immediate guardianship of her aunt, under whose overshadowing care she vegetated in obscurity, like an opening rose blooming beneath a brier. Nor, indeed, is this comparison entirely accidental, for to tell the truth her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighborhood had given her the appellation of "The Rose of the Alhambra."

The wary aunt continued to keep a faithful watch over her tempting little niece as long as the court continued at Granada, and flattered herself that her vigilance had been successful. It is true, the good lady was now and then discomposed by the tinkling of guitars and chanting of love ditties from the moonlit groves beneath the tower, but she would exhort her niece to shut her ears against such idle minstrelsy, assuring her that it was one of the arts of the opposite sex, by which simple maids were often lured to their undoing—alas, what chance with a simple maid has a dry lecture against a moonlight serenade!

At length King Philip cut short his sojourn at Granada, and suddenly departed with all his train. The vigilant Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued forth from the gate of Justice and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over. To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket gate of the garden—to her horror she saw through the thickets of roses a youth, in gayly embroidered dress, at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta in the agony of her grief lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke forth into sobs and tears.

"Ay di mi!" cried she, "he is gone! he is gone! and I shall never see him more."

"Gone! who is gone? what youth is this I saw at your feet?"

"A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell."

"A queen's page, child," echoed the vigilant Fredogonda faintly, "and when did you become acquainted with a queen's page?"

"The morning that the gerfalcon flew into the tower. It was the queen's gerfalcon, and he came in pursuit of it."

"Ah, silly, silly girl! know that there are no gerfalcons half so dangerous as these pranking pages, and it is precisely such simple birds as thee that they pounce upon."

The aunt was at first indignant at learning that, in despite of her boasted vigilance, a tender intercourse had been carried on by the youthful lovers, almost beneath her eye; but when she found that her simple-hearted niece, though thus exposed, without the protection of bolt or bar, to all the machinations of the opposite sex, had come forth unsinged from the fiery ordeal, she consoled herself with the persuasion that it was owing to the chaste and cautious maxims in which she had, as it were, steeped her to the very lips.

While the aunt laid this soothing unction to her pride, the niece treasured up the oft-repeated vows of fidelity of the page. But what is the love of restless, roving man? a vagrant stream that dallies for a time with each flower upon its banks, then passes on and leaves them all in tears.

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumnal rains descended in torrents from the mountains; the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle, and wintry blasts howled through the halls of the Alhambra: still he came not. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song, and blossoms, and balmy zephyr; the snows melted from the mountains, until none remained but on the lofty summit of the Nevada, glistening through the sultry summer air: still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the meantime, the poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned; her silk lay entangled, her guitar unstrung, her flowers were neglected, the notes of her bird unheeded, and her eyes, once so bright, were dimmed

with secret weeping. If any solitude could be devised to foster the passion of a love-lorn damsel, it would be such a place as the Alhambra, where everything seems disposed to produce tender and romantic reveries. It is a very paradise for lovers; how hard then to be alone in such a paradise; and not merely alone, but forsaken.

“Alas, silly child!” would the staid and immaculate Fredegonda say, when she found her niece in one of her desponding moods, “did I not warn thee against the wiles and deceptions of these men? What couldst thou expect, too, from one of a haughty and aspiring family, thou, an orphan, the descendant of a fallen and impoverished line; be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as thou. Pluck up thy resolution, therefore, and drive these idle notions from thy mind.”

The words of the immaculate Fredegonda only served to increase the melancholy of her niece, but she sought to indulge it in private. At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had retired to rest, she remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. It was here that the faithless page had first knelt and kissed her hand, it was here that he had often vowed eternal fidelity. The poor little damsel’s heart was overladen with sad and tender recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell, drop by drop, into the fountain. By degrees the crystal water became agitated, and, bubble—bubble—bubble, boiled up, and was tossed about until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish robes, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall, and did not venture to return. The next morning she related what she had seen to her aunt, but the good lady treated it as a fantasy of her troubled mind, or supposed she had fallen asleep and dreamed beside the fountain. “Thou hast been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once inhabited the tower,” continued she, “and it has entered into thy dreams.”

“What story, aunt? I know nothing of it.”

“Thou hast certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, who were confined in this tower by the king their father, and agreed to fly

with three Christian cavaliers. The first two accomplished their escape, but the third failed in resolution and remained, and it is said died in this tower."

"I now recollect to have heard of it," said Jacinta, "and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda."

"Thou mayst well weep over her fate," continued the aunt, "for the lover of Zorahayda was thy ancestor. He long bemoaned his Moorish love, but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady, from whom thou art descended."

Jacinta ruminated upon these words. "That what I have seen is no fantasy of the brain," said she to herself, "I am confident. If indeed it be the sprite of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid? I'll watch by the fountain to-night, perhaps the visit will be repeated."

Toward midnight, when everything was quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell on the distant watch-tower of the Alhambra struck the midnight hour the fountain was again agitated, and bubble—bubble—bubble, it tossed about the waters until the Moorish female again rose to view. She was young and beautiful; her dress was rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition, and the sweet expression of her pale, melancholy countenance.

"Daughter of Mortality," said she, "what aileth thee? Why do thy tears trouble my fountain, and thy sighs and plaints disturb the quiet watches of the night?"

"I weep because of the faithlessness of man; and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state."

"Take comfort, thy sorrows may yet have an end. Thou beholdest a Moorish princess, who, like thee, was unhappy in her love. A Christian knight, thy ancestor, won my heart and would have borne me to his native land, and to the bosom of his church. I was a convert in my heart, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this, the evil genii are permitted to have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this tower, until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Wilt thou undertake the task?"

"I will!" replied the damsel, trembling.

“Come hither, then, and fear not: dip thy hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me, and baptize me after the manner of thy faith; so shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose.”

The damsel advanced with faltering steps, dipped her hand in the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled with ineffable benignity. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta, crossed her white arms upon her bosom, and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dewdrops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall, filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night, but when she awoke at daybreak out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a distempered dream. On descending into the hall, however, the truth of the vision was established; for beside the fountain she beheld the silver lute glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, related all that had befallen her and called her to behold the lute as a testimonial of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any lingering doubts they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she drew forth such ravishing tones as to thaw even the frigid bosom of the immaculate Fredegonda, that region of eternal winter, into a genial flow. Nothing but supernatural melody could have produced such an effect.

The extraordinary power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer passing by the tower was detained, and, as it were, spellbound, in breathless ecstasy. The very birds gathered in the neighboring trees and, hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence. Rumor soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra, to catch a few notes of the transcendent music that floated about the tower of Las Infantas.

The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn forth from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honor to her; or rather, who should secure the charms of her lute, to draw fashionable throngs to their saloons. Wherever she went her vigilant aunt kept a dragon-watch at her

elbow, awing the throngs of impassioned admirers who hung in raptures on her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city: Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all became successively mad on the theme; nothing was talked of throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra. How could it be otherwise among a people so musical and gallant as the Andalusians, when the lute was magical in its powers, and the minstrel inspired by love?

While all Andalusia was thus music-mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. Philip V., as is well known, was a miserable hypochondriac, and subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendors of a court and the glories of a crown, and guided the scepter of her imbecile lord with an expert and steady hand.

Nothing was found to be so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the powers of music; the queen took care, therefore, to have the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, at hand, and retained the famous Italian singer Farinelli about the court as a kind of royal physician.

At the moment we treat of, however, a freak had come over the mind of this sapient and illustrious Bourbon that surpassed all former vagaries. After a long spell of imaginary illness, which set all the strains of Farinelli and the consultations of a whole orchestra of court fiddlers at defiance, the monarch fairly, in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to his queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude befitting a dead man; but, to their annoyance, he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him and, to their inexpressible perplexity, began to grow impatient, and to revile bitterly at them for negligence and disrespect in leaving him unburied. What was to be done? To disobey the king's positive commands was monstrous in the eyes of the obsequious courtiers of a punctilious court—but to obey him, and bury him alive, would be downright regicide!

In the midst of this fearful dilemma a rumor reached the court of the female minstrel, who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. The queen dispatched missives in all haste, to summon her to St. Ildefonso, where the court at that time resided.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honor was walking in those stately gardens, intended, with their avenues and terraces and fountains, to eclipse the glories of Versailles, the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The imperial Elizabetta gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress; her silver lute was in her hand, and she stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her "The Rose of the Alhambra."

As usual, she was accompanied by the ever vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. If the stately Elizabetta had been interested by the appearance of Jacinta, she was still more pleased when she learned that she was of a meritorious, though impoverished line, and that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown. "If thy powers equal their renown," said she, "and thou canst cast forth the evil spirit that possesses thy sovereign, thy fortune shall henceforth be my care, and honors and wealth attend thee."

Impatient to make trial of her skill, she led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch. Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through files of guards and crowds of courtiers. They arrived at length at a great chamber hung in black. The windows were closed, to exclude the light of day; a number of yellow wax tapers, in silver sconces, diffused a lugubrious light, and dimly revealed the figures of mutes in mourning dresses, and courtiers, who glided about with noiseless step and woe-begone visage. On the midst of a funeral bed or bier, his hands folded on his breast, and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and pointing to a footstool in an obscure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence and animation as she proceeded, drew forth such soft, aërial harmony that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the monarch, who had already considered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody, or the music of the spheres. By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of the minstrel accompanied the instrument. She poured forth one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra and the achievements of the Moors. Her whole soul entered into the theme, for with the recollections of the Alhambra was associated the story of her love; the funereal chamber resounded with the animating strain. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around, he sat up on his couch; his eye began to kindle; at length, leaping upon the floor, he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute, was complete; the demon of melancholy was cast forth; and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open; the glorious effulgence of Spanish sunshine burst into the late lugubrious chamber; all eyes sought the lovely enchantress, but the lute had fallen from her hand; she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the bosom of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The nuptials of the happy couple were shortly after celebrated with great splendor—but hold, I hear the reader ask how did Ruyz de Alarcon account for his long neglect? Oh—that was all owing to the opposition of a proud pragmatrical old father—besides, young people who really like one another soon come to an amicable understanding, and bury all past grievances whenever they meet.

But how was the proud pragmatrical old father reconciled to the match?

Oh, his scruples were easily overruled by a word or two from the queen—especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favorite of royalty. Besides, the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest heart.

And what became of the enchanted lute?

Oh, that is the most curious matter of all, and plainly proves the truth of all the story. That lute remained for some time in the family, but was purloined and carried off, as was supposed, by the great singer Farinelli, in pure jealousy. At his death it passed into other hands in Italy, who were ignorant of its mystic powers, and melting down the silver, transferred the strings to an old Cremona fiddle. The strings still retain something of their magic virtues. A word in the reader's ear, but let it go no further—that fiddle is now bewitching the whole world—it is the fiddle of Paganini!

THE VETERAN.

AMONG the curious acquaintances I have made in my rambles about the fortress is a brave and battered old colonel of invalids, who is nestled like a hawk in one of the Moorish towers. His history, which he is fond of telling, is a tissue of those adventures, mishaps, and vicissitudes that render the life of almost every Spaniard of note as varied and whimsical as the pages of Gil Blas.

He was in America at twelve years of age, and reckons among the most signal and fortunate events of his life, his having seen General Washington. Since then he has taken a part in all the wars of his country; he can speak experimentally of most of the prisons and dungeons of the peninsula, has been lamed of one leg, crippled in his hand, and so cut up and carbonadoed that he is a kind of walking monument of the troubles of Spain, on which there is a scar for every battle and broil, as every year was notched upon the tree of Robinson Crusoe. The greatest misfortune of the brave old cavalier, however, appears to have been his having commanded at Malaga during a time of peril and confusion, and been made a general by the inhabitants to protect them from the invasion of the French.

This has entailed upon him a number of just claims upon government that I fear will employ him until his dying day in writing and printing petitions and memorials, to the great disquiet of his mind, exhaustion of his

purse, and penance of his friends, not one of whom can visit him without having to listen to a mortal document of half an hour in length, and to carry away half a dozen pamphlets in his pocket. This, however, is the case throughout Spain: everywhere you meet with some worthy wight brooding in a corner, and nursing up some pet grievance and cherished wrong. Besides, a Spaniard who has a lawsuit, or a claim upon government, may be considered as furnished with employment for the remainder of his life.

I visited the veteran in his quarters in the upper part of the *Terre del Vino*, or Wine Tower. His room was small but snug, and commanded a beautiful view of the *Vega*. It was arranged with a soldier's precision. Three muskets and a brace of pistols, all bright and shining, were suspended against the wall, with a saber and a cane hanging side by side, and above these two cocked hats, one for parade, and one for ordinary use. A small shelf, containing some half-dozen books, formed his library, one of which, a little old moldy volume of philosophical maxims, was his favorite reading. This he thumbed and pondered over day by day; applying every maxim to his own particular case, provided it had a little tinge of wholesome bitterness, and treated of the injustice of the world.

Yet he is social and kind-hearted, and, provided he can be diverted from his wrongs and his philosophy, is an entertaining companion. I like these old weather-beaten sons of fortune, and enjoy their rough campaigning anecdotes. In the course of my visit to the one in question, I learned some curious facts about an old military commander of the fortress, who seems to have resembled him in some respects, and to have had similar fortunes in the wars. These particulars have been augmented by inquiries among some of the old inhabitants of the place, particularly the father of *Mateo Ximenes*, of whose traditional stories the worthy I am about to introduce to the reader is a favorite hero.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE NOTARY.

IN former times there ruled, as governor of the Alhambra, a doughty old cavalier, who, from having lost one arm in the wars, was commonly known by the name of El Gobernador Manco, or the one-armed governor. He in fact prided himself upon being an old soldier, wore his mustachios curled up to his eyes, a pair of campaigning boots, and a toledo as long as a spit, with his pocket handkerchief in the basket-hilt.

He was, moreover, exceedingly proud and punctilious, and tenacious of all his privileges and dignities. Under his sway, the immunities of the Alhambra, as a royal residence and domain, were rigidly exacted. No one was permitted to enter the fortress with firearms, or even with a sword or staff, unless he were of a certain rank, and every horseman was obliged to dismount at the gate and lead his horse by the bridle. Now, as the hill of the Alhambra rises from the very midst of the city of Granada, being, as it were, an excrescence of the capital, it must at all times be somewhat irksome to the captain-general who commands the provinc, to have thus an *imperium in imperio*, a petty, independent post in the very core of his domains. It was rendered the more galling in the present instance, from the irritable jealousy of the old governor, that took fire on the least question of authority and jurisdiction, and from the loose, vagrant character of the people that had gradually nestled themselves within the fortress as in a sanctuary, and from thence carried on a system of roguery and depredation at the expense of the honest inhabitants of the city. Thus there was a perpetual feud and heart-burning between the captain-general and the governor; the more virulent on the part of the latter, inasmuch as the smallest of two neighboring potentates is always the most captious about his dignity. The stately palace of the captain-general stood in the Plaza Nueva, immediately at the foot of the hill of the Alhambra, and here was always a bustle and parade of guards, and domestics, and city functionaries. A beetling bastion of the fortress overlooked the palace and the public square in front of it; and on this bastion the old governor would occasionally strut backward and forward, with his toledo girded

by his side, keeping a wary eye down upon his rival, like a hawk reconnoitering his quarry from his nest in a dry tree.

Whenever he descended into the city it was in grand parade, on horseback, surrounded by his guards, or in his state coach, an ancient and unwieldy Spanish edifice of carved timber and gilt leather, drawn by eight mules, with running footmen, outriders, and lackeys, on which occasions he flattered himself he impressed every beholder with awe and admiration as vicegerent of the king, though the wits of Granada, particularly those who loitered about the palace of the captain-general, were apt to sneer at his petty parade, and, in allusion to the vagrant character of his subjects, to greet him with the appellation of "the king of the beggars."

One of the most fruitful sources of dispute between these two doughty rivals was the right claimed by the governor to have all things passed free of duty through the city, that were intended for the use of himself or his garrison. By degrees, this privilege had given rise to extensive smuggling. A nest of contrabandistas took up their abode in the hovels of the fortress and the numerous caves in its vicinity, and drove a thriving business under the connivance of the soldiers of the garrison.

The vigilance of the captain-general was aroused. He consulted his legal adviser and factotum, a shrewd, meddling *Escribano* or notary, who rejoiced in an opportunity of perplexing the old potentate of the Alhambra, and involving him in a maze of legal subtilities. He advised the captain-general to insist upon the right of examining every convoy passing through the gates of his city, and he penned a long letter for him, in vindication of the right. Governor Manco was a straightforward, cut-and-thrust old soldier, who hated an *Escribano* worse than the devil, and this one in particular, worse than all other *Escribanos*.

"What!" said he, curling up his mustachios fiercely, "does the captain-general set his man of the pen to practice confusions upon me? I'll let him see that an old soldier is not to be baffled by schoolcraft."

He seized his pen, and scrawled a short letter in a crabbed hand, in which, without deigning to enter into argument, he insisted on the right of transit free of

search, and denounced vengeance on any custom-house officer who should lay his unhallowed hand on any convoy protected by the flag of the Alhambra.

While this question was agitated between the two pragmatistical potentates, it so happened that a mule laden with supplies for the fortress arrived one day at the gate of Xenil, by which it was to traverse a suburb of the city on its way to the Alhambra. The convoy was headed by a testy old corporal, who had long served under the governor, and was a man after his own heart—as trusty and stanch as an old toledo blade. As they approached the gate of the city, the corporal placed the banner of the Alhambra on the pack saddle of the mule, and drawing himself up to a perfect perpendicular, advanced with his head dressed to the front, but with the wary side glance of a cur passing through hostile grounds, and ready for a snap and a snarl.

“Who goes there?” said the sentinel at the gate.

“Soldier of the Alhambra,” said the corporal, without turning his head.

“What have you in charge?”

“Provisions for the garrison.”

“Proceed.”

The corporal marched straight forward, followed by the convoy, but had not advanced many paces before a posse of custom-house officers rushed out of a small toll-house.

“Halloo there!” cried the leader: “Muleteer, halt and open those packages.”

The corporal wheeled round, and drew himself up in battle array. “Respect the flag of the Alhambra,” said he; “these things are for the governor.”

“A fig for the governor, and a fig for his flag. Muleteer, halt, I say.”

“Stop the convoy at your peril!” cried the corporal, cocking his musket. “Muleteer, proceed.”

The muleteer gave his beast a hearty thwack, the custom-house officer sprang forward and seized the halter; whereupon the corporal leveled his piece and shot him dead.

The street was immediately in an uproar. The old corporal was seized, and after undergoing sundry kicks and cuffs, and cudgelings, which are generally given

impromptu by the mob in Spain, as a foretaste of the after penalties of the law, he was loaded with irons, and conducted to the city prison; while his comrades were permitted to proceed with the convoy, after it had been well rummaged, to the Alhambra.

The old governor was in a towering passion, when he heard of this insult to his flag and capture of his corporal. For a time he stormed about the Moorish halls, and vaped about the bastions, and looked down fire and sword upon the palace of the captain-general. Having vented the first ebullition of his wrath, he dispatched a message demanding the surrender of the corporal, as to him alone belonged the right of sitting in judgment on the offenses of those under his command. The captain-general, aided by the pen of the delighted Escribano, replied at great length, arguing that as the offense had been committed within the walls of his city, and against one of his civil officers, it was clearly within his proper jurisdiction. The governor rejoined by a repetition of his demand; the captain-general gave a sur-rejoinder of still greater length, and legal acumen; the governor became hotter and more peremptory in his demands, and the captain-general cooler and more copious in his replies; until the old lion-hearted soldier absolutely roared with fury at being thus entangled in the meshes of legal controversy.

While the subtle Escribano was thus amusing himself at the expense of the governor, he was conducting the trial of the corporal; who, mewed up in a narrow dungeon of the prison, had merely a small grated window at which to show his iron-bound visage, and receive the consolations of his friends; a mountain of written testimony was diligently heaped up, according to Spanish form, by the indefatigable Escribano; the corporal was completely overwhelmed by it. He was convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hanged.

It was in vain the governor sent down remonstrance and menace from the Alhambra. The fatal day was at hand, and the corporal was put *in capilla*, that is to say, in the chapel of the prison; as is always done with culprits the day before execution, that they may meditate on their approaching end and repent them of their sins.

Seeing things drawing to an extremity, the old gov-

ernor determined to attend to the affair in person. For this purpose he ordered out his carriage of state and, surrounded by his guards, rumbled down the avenue of the Alhambra into the city. Driving to the house of the Escribano, he summoned him to the portal.

The eye of the old governor gleamed like a coal at beholding the smirking man of the law advancing with an air of exultation.

“What is this I hear,” cried he, “that you are about to put to death one of my soldiers?”

“All according to law—all in strict form of justice,” said the self-sufficient Escribano, chuckling and rubbing his hands. “I can show your excellency the written testimony in the case.”

“Fetch it hither,” said the governor.

The Escribano bustled into his office, delighted with having another opportunity of displaying his ingenuity at the expense of the hard-headed veteran. He returned with a satchel full of papers, and began to read a long deposition with professional volubility. By this time a crowd had collected, listening with outstretched necks and gaping mouths.

“Prithee man, get into the carriage out of this pestilent throng, that I may the better hear thee,” said the governor.

The Escribano entered the carriage, when in a twinkling the door was closed, the coachman smacked his whip, mules, carriage, guards, and all dashed off at a thundering rate, leaving the crowd in gaping wonderment, nor did the governor pause until he had lodged his prey in one of the strongest dungeons of the Alhambra.

He then sent down a flag of truce in military style, proposing a cartel or exchange of prisoners, the corporal for the notary. The pride of the captain-general was piqued, he returned a contemptuous refusal, and forthwith caused a gallows, tall and strong, to be erected in the center of the Plaza Neuva, for the execution of the corporal.

“Oho! is that the game?” said Governor Manco: he gave orders, and immediately a gibbet was reared on the verge of the great beetling bastion that overlooked the Plaza. “Now,” said he, in a message to the captain-

general, "hang my soldier when you please; but at the same time that he is swung off in the square, look up to see your Escribano dangling against the sky."

The captain-general was inflexible; troops were paraded in the square; the drums beat; the bell tolled; an immense multitude of amateurs had collected to behold the execution; on the other hand, the governor paraded his garrison on the bastion, and tolled the funeral dirge of the notary from the Torre de la Campana, or tower of the bell.

The notary's wife pressed through the crowd with a whole progeny of little embryo Escribanoes at her heels, and throwing herself at the feet of the captain-general implored him not to sacrifice the life of her husband and the welfare of herself and her numerous little ones to a point of pride; "for you know the old governor too well," said she, "to doubt that he will put his threat in execution if you hang the soldier."

The captain-general was overpowered by her tears and lamentations, and the clamors of her callow brood. The corporal was sent up to the Alhambra under a guard, in his gallows garb, like a hooded friar; but with head erect and a face of iron. The Escribano was demanded in exchange, according to the cartel. The once bustling and self-sufficient man of the law was drawn forth from his dungeon, more dead than alive. All his flippancy and conceit had evaporated; his hair, it is said, had nearly turned gray with fright, and he had a downcast, dogged look, as if he still felt the halter round his neck.

The old governor stuck his one arm akimbo, and for a moment surveyed him with an iron smile. "Henceforth, my friend," said he, "moderate your zeal in hurrying others to the gallows; be not too certain of your own safety, even though you should have the law on your side; and, above all, take care how you play off your schoolcraft another time upon an old soldier."

GOVERNOR MANCO AND THE SOLDIER.

WHEN Governor Manco, or the one-armed, kept up a show of military state in the Alhambra, he became net-

tled at the reproaches continually cast upon his fortress of being a nestling place of rogues and contrabandistas. On a sudden, the old potentate determined on reform, and setting vigorously to work, ejected whole nests of vagabonds out of the fortress and the gypsy caves with which the surrounding hills are honeycombed. He sent out soldiers, also, to patrol the avenues and footpaths, with orders to take up all suspicious persons.

One bright summer morning a patrol consisting of the testy old corporal who had distinguished himself in the affair of the notary, a trumpeter and two privates were seated under the garden wall of the Generaliffe, beside the road which leads down from the Mountain of the Sun, when they heard the tramp of a horse, and a male voice singing in rough, though not unmusical tones, an old Castilian campaigning song.

Presently they beheld a sturdy, sunburnt fellow clad in the ragged garb of a foot-soldier leading a powerful Arabian horse caparisoned in the ancient Morisco fashion.

Astonished at the sight of a strange soldier, descending, steed in hand, from that solitary mountain, the corporal stepped forth and challenged him.

“Who goes there?”

“A friend.”

“Who and what are you?”

“A poor soldier, just from the wars, with a cracked crown and empty purse for a reward.”

By this time they were enabled to view him more narrowly. He had a black patch across his forehead, which with a grizzled beard added to a certain dare-devil cast of countenance, while a slight squint threw into the whole an occasional gleam of roguish good-humor.

Having answered the questions of the patrol, the soldier seemed to consider himself entitled to make others in return.

“May I ask,” said he, “what city is this which I see at the foot of the hill?”

“What city!” cried the trumpeter; “come, that’s too bad. Here’s a fellow lurking about the Mountain of the Sun, and demands the name of the great city of Granada.”

“Granada! Madre de Dios! can it be possible!”

“Perhaps not!” rejoined the trumpeter, “and perhaps you have no idea that yonder are the towers of the Alhambra?”

"Son of a trumpet," replied the stranger, "do not trifle with me; if this be indeed the Alhambra, I have some strange matters to reveal to the governor."

"You will have an opportunity," said the corporal, "for we mean to take you before him."

By this time the trumpeter had seized the bridle of the steed, the two privates had each secured an arm of the soldier, the corporal put himself in front, gave the word, "forward march!" and away they marched for the Alhambra.

The sight of a ragged foot-soldier and a fine Arabian horse brought in captive by the patrol attracted the attention of all the idlers of the fortress, and of those gossip groups that generally assemble about wells and fountains at early dawn. The wheel of the cistern paused in its rotations; the slipshod servant-maid stood gaping with pitcher in hand, as the corporal passed by with his prize. A motley train gradually gathered in the rear of the escort. Knowing nods, and winks, and conjectures passed from one to another. It is a deserter, said one; a contrabandista, said another; a bandalero, said a third, until it was affirmed that a captain of a desperate band of robbers had been captured by the prowess of the corporal and his patrol. "Well, well," said the old crones one to another, "captain or not, let him get out of the grasp of old Governor Manco if he can, though he is but one-handed."

Governor Manco was seated in one of the inner halls of the Alhambra, taking his morning's cup of chocolate in company with his confessor, a fat Franciscan friar from the neighboring convent. A demure, dark-eyed damsel of Malaga, the daughter of his housekeeper, was attending upon him.

The world hinted that the damsel, who with all her demureness was a sly, buxom baggage, had found out a soft spot in the iron heart of the old governor, and held complete control over him—but let that pass; the domestic affairs of these mighty potentates of the earth should not be too narrowly scrutinized.

When word was brought that a suspicious stranger had been taken lurking about the fortress, and was actually in the outer court, in durance of the corporal, waiting the pleasure of his excellency, the pride and stateliness

of office swelled the bosom of the governor. Giving back his chocolate cup into the hands of the demure damsel, he called for his basket-hilted sword, girded it to his side, twirled up his mustachios, took his seat in a large high-backed chair, assumed a bitter and forbidding aspect, and ordered the prisoner into his presence. The soldier was brought in, still closely pinioned by his captors, and guarded by the corporal. He maintained, however, a resolute, self-confident air, and returned the sharp, scrutinizing look of the governor with an easy squint, which by no means pleased the punctilious old potentate.

“Well, culprit!” said the governor, after he had regarded him for a moment in silence, “what have you to say for yourself? who are you?”

“A soldier, just from the wars, who has brought away nothing but scars and bruises.”

“A soldier? humph! a foot-soldier by your garb. I understand you have a fine Arabian horse. I presume you brought him too from the wars, beside your scars and bruises.”

“May it please your excellency, I have something strange to tell about that horse. Indeed, I have one of the most wonderful things to relate—something too that concerns the security of this fortress, indeed, of all Granada. But it is a matter to be imparted only to your private ear, or in presence of such only as are in your confidence.”

The governor considered for a moment, and then directed the corporal and his men to withdraw, but to post themselves outside of the door, and be ready at call. “This holy friar,” said he, “is my confessor, you may say anything in his presence—and this damsel,” nodding toward the handmaid, who had loitered with an air of great curiosity, “this damsel is of great secrecy and discretion, and to be trusted with anything.”

The soldier gave a glance between a squint and a leer at the demure handmaid. “I am perfectly willing,” said he, “that the damsel should remain.”

When all the rest had withdrawn, the soldier commenced his story. He was a fluent, smooth-tongued varlet, and had a command of language above his apparent rank.

“May it please your excellency,” said he, “I am, as I before observed, a soldier, and have seen some hard service, but my term of enlistment being expired, I was discharged not long since from the army at Valladolid, and set out on foot for my native village in Andalusia. Yesterday evening the sun went down as I was traversing a great dry plain of old Castile.”

“Hold!” cried the governor, “what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this.”

“Even so,” replied the soldier coolly, “I told your excellency I had strange things to relate—but not more strange than true—as your excellency will find, if you will deign me a patient hearing.”

“Proceed, culprit,” said the governor, twirling up his mustachios.

“As the sun went down,” continued the soldier, “I cast my eyes about in search of some quarters for the night, but far as my sight could reach there were no signs of habitation. I saw that I should have to make my bed on the naked plain, with my knapsack for a pillow; but your excellency is an old soldier, and knows that to one who has been in the wars, such a night’s lodging is no great hardship.”

The governor nodded assent, as he drew his pocket-handkerchief out of the basket-hilt of his sword, to drive away a fly that buzzed about his nose.

“Well, to make a long story short,” continued the soldier, “I trudged forward for several miles, until I came to a bridge over a deep ravine, through which ran a little thread of water almost dried up by the summer heat. At one end of the bridge was a Moorish tower, the upper part all in ruins, but a vault in the foundations quite entire. Here, thinks I, is a good place to make a halt. So I went down to the stream, took a hearty drink, for the water was pure and sweet, and I was parched with thirst, then opening my wallet, I took out an onion and a few crusts, which were all my provisions, and seating myself on a stone on the margin of the stream, began to make my supper; intending afterward to quarter myself for the night in the vault of the tower, and capital quarters they would have been for a campaigner just from the wars, as your excellency, who is an old soldier, may suppose.”

"I have put up gladly with worse in my time," said the governor, returning his pocket-handkerchief into the hilt of his sword.

"While I was quietly crunching my crust," pursued the soldier, "I heard something stir within the vault; I listened: it was the tramp of a horse. By and by a man came forth from the door in the foundation of the tower, close by the water's edge, leading a powerful horse by the bridle. I could not well make out what he was by the starlight. It had a suspicious look to be lurking among the ruins of a tower in that wild solitary place. He might be a mere wayfarer like myself; he might be a contrabandista; he might be a bandalero! What of that—thank Heaven and my poverty, I had nothing to lose, so I sat still and crunched my crusts.

"He led his horse to the water close by where I was sitting, so that I had a fair opportunity of reconnoitering him. To my surprise, he was dressed in a Moorish garb, with a cuirass of steel, and a polished skull cap, that I distinguished by the reflection of the stars upon it. His horse, too, was harnessed in the Morisco fashion, with great shovel stirrups. He led him, as I said, to the side of the stream, into which the animal plunged his head almost to the eyes, and drank until I thought he would have burst.

"'Comrade,' said I, 'your steed drinks well; it's a good sign when a horse plunges his muzzle bravely into the water.'

"'He may well drink,' said the stranger, speaking with a Moorish accent; 'it is a good year since he had his last draught.'

"'By Santiago,' said I, 'that beats even the camels that I have seen in Africa. But come, you seem to be something of a soldier, won't you sit down and take part of a soldier's fare?' In fact I felt the want of a companion in this lonely place, and was willing to put up with an infidel. Besides, as your excellency well knows, a soldier is never very particular about the faith of his company, and soldiers of all countries are comrades on peaceable ground."

The governor again nodded assent.

"Well, as I was saying, I invited him to share my supper, such as it was, for I could not do less in common hospitality.

“‘I have no time to pause for meat or drink,’ said he; ‘I have a long journey to make before morning.’”

“‘In which direction?’ said I.

“‘Andalusia,’ said he.

“‘Exactly my route,’ said I. ‘So as you won’t stop and eat with me perhaps you’ll let me mount and ride with you. I see your horse is of a powerful frame: I’ll warrant he’ll carry double.’”

“‘Agreed,’ said the trooper; and it would not have been civil and soldierlike to refuse, especially as I had offered to share my supper with him. So up he mounted, and up I mounted behind him.

“‘Hold fast,’ said he, ‘my steed goes like the wind.’”

“‘Never fear me,’ said I, and so off we set.

“‘From a walk the horse soon passed to a trot, from a trot to a gallop, and from a gallop to a harum-scarum scamper. It seemed as if rocks, trees, houses, everything flew hurry-scurry behind us.

“‘What town is this?’ said I.

“‘Segovia,’ said he; and before the words were out of his mouth the towers of Segovia were out of sight. We swept up the Guadarama Mountains and down by the Escorial; and we skirted the walls of Madrid and we scoured away across the plains of La Mancha. In this way we went up hill and down dale, by towns and cities all buried in deep sleep, and across mountains and plains and rivers, just glimmering in the starlight.

“‘To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper suddenly pulled up on the side of a mountain. ‘Here we are,’ said he, ‘at the end of our journey.’”

“‘I looked about, but could see no signs of habitation—nothing but the mouth of a cavern; while I looked, I saw multitudes of people in Moorish dresses, some on horseback, some on foot, arriving as if borne by the wind from all points of the compass, and hurrying into the mouth of the cavern like bees into a hive. Before I could ask a question the trooper struck his long Moorish spurs into the horse’s flanks, and dashed in with the throng. We passed along a steep winding way that descended into the very bowels of the mountain. As we pushed on a light began to glimmer up by little and little, like the first glimmerings of day, but what caused it I

could not discover. It grew stronger and stronger, and enabled me to see everything around. I now noticed, as we passed along, great caverns opening to the right and left, like halls in an arsenal. In some there were shields, and helmets, and cuirasses, and lances, and scimitars hanging against the walls; in others there were great heaps of warlike munitions and camp equipage lying upon the ground.

“It would have done your excellency’s heart good, being an old soldier, to have seen such grand provision for war. Then in other caverns there were long rows of horsemen, armed to the teeth, with lances raised and banners unfurled, all ready for the field; but they all sat motionless in their saddles like so many statues. In other halls were warriors sleeping on the ground beside their horses, and foot soldiers in groups, ready to fall into the ranks. All were in old-fashioned Moorish dresses and armor.

“Well, your excellency, to cut a long story short, we at length entered an immense cavern, or I might say palace, of grotto work, the walls of which seemed to be veined with gold and silver, and to sparkle with diamonds and sapphires, and all kinds of precious stones. At the upper end sat a Moorish king on a golden throne, with his nobles on each side, and a guard of African blacks with drawn scimitars. All the crowd that continued to flock in, and amounted to thousands and thousands, passed one by one before his throne, each paying homage as he passed. Some of the multitude were dressed in magnificent robes, without stain or blemish, and sparkling with jewels; others in burnished and enameled armor; while others were in moldered and mildewed garments and in armor all battered and dented, and covered with rust.

“I had hitherto held my tongue, for your excellency well knows it is not for a soldier to ask many questions when on duty, but I could keep silence no longer.

“‘Prithee, comrade,’ said I, ‘what is the meaning of all this?’

“‘This,’ said the trooper, ‘is a great and powerful mystery. Know, O Christian, that you see before you the court and army of Boabdil, the last king of Granada.’

“‘What is this you tell me!’ cried I. ‘Boabdil and

his court were exiled from the land hundreds of years ago, and all died in Africa.'

"'So it is recorded in your lying chronicles,' replied the Moor; 'but know that Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in this mountain by powerful enchantment. As to the king and army that marched forth from Granada at the time of the surrender, they were a mere phantom train, or spirits and demons permitted to assume those shapes to deceive the Christian sovereigns. And furthermore let me tell you, friend, that all Spain is a country under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain-cave, not a lonely watch-tower in the plains, nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spell-bound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults, until the sins are expiated for which Allah permitted the dominion to pass for a time out of the hands of the faithful. Once every year, on the eve of St. John, they are released from enchantment from sunset to sunrise, and permitted to repair here to pay homage to their sovereign; and the crowds which you beheld swarming into the cavern are Moslem warriors from their haunts in all parts of Spain; for my own part, you saw the ruined tower of the bridge in old Castile, where I have now wintered and summered for many hundred years, and where I must be back again by daybreak. As to the battalions of horse and foot which you beheld drawn up in array in the neighboring caverns, they are the spell-bound warriors of Granada. It is written in the book of fate that when the enchantment is broken Boabdil will descend from the mountains at the head of this army, resume his throne in the Alhambra and his sway of Granada, and gathering together the enchanted warriors from all parts of Spain, will reconquer the peninsula, and restore it to Moslem rule.'

"'And when shall this happen?' said I.

"'Allah alone knows. We had hoped the day of deliverance was at hand; but there reigns at present a vigilant governor in Alhambra, a stanch old soldier, the same called Governor Manco; while such a warrior holds command of the very outpost and stands ready to check the first irruption from the mountain, I fear Boabdil and his soldiery must be content to rest upon their arms.'"

Here the governor raised himself somewhat perpendicularly, adjusted his sword, and twirled up his mustachios.

“To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper, having given me this account, dismounted from his steed.

“‘Tarry here,’ said he, ‘and guard my steed, while I go and bow the knee to Boabdil.’ So saying he strode away among the throng that pressed forward to the throne.

“What’s to be done? thought I, when thus left to myself. Shall I wait here until this infidel returns to whisk me off on his goblin steed, the Lord knows where? or shall I make the most of my time, and beat a retreat from this hobgoblin community? A soldier’s mind is soon made up, as your excellency well knows. As to the horse, he belonged to an avowed enemy of the faith and the realm, and was a fair prize according to the rules of war. So hoisting myself from the crupper into the saddle, I turned the reins, struck the Moorish stirrups into the sides of the steed, and put him to make the best of his way out of the passage by which we had entered. As we scoured by the halls where the Moslem horsemen sat in motionless battalions, I thought I heard the clang of armor, and a hollow murmur of voices. I gave the steed another taste of the stirrups, and doubled my speed. There was now a sound behind me like a rushing blast; I heard the clatter of a thousand hoofs; a countless throng overtook me; I was borne along in the press, and hurled forth from the mouth of the cavern, while thousands of shadowy forms were swept off in every direction by the four winds of heaven.

“In the whirl and confusion of the scene I was thrown from the saddle, and fell senseless to the earth. When I came to myself I was lying on the brow of a hill, with the Arabian steed standing beside me, for in falling my arm had slipped within the bridle, which, I presume, prevented his whisking off to old Castile.

“Your excellency may easily judge of my surprise on looking round, to behold hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and other proofs of a southern climate, and see a great city below me with towers and palaces, and a grand cathedral. I descended the hill cautiously, leading my steed, for I was afraid to mount him again lest he should play me some slippery trick. As I descended I met with your patrol, who let me into the secret that it was Gra-

nada that lay before me: and that I was actually under the walls of the Alhambra, the fortress of the redoubted Governor Manco, the terror of all enchanted Moslems. When I heard this I determined at once to seek your excellency, to inform you of all that I had seen, and to warn you of the perils that surround and undermine you, that you may take measures in time to guard your fortress, and the kingdom itself, from this intestine army that lurks in the very bowels of the land."

"And prithee, friend, you who are a veteran campaigner, and have seen so much service," said the governor, "how would you advise me to go about to prevent this evil?"

"It is not for an humble private of the ranks," said the soldier modestly, "to pretend to instruct a commander of your excellency's sagacity; but it appears to me that your excellency might cause all the caves and entrances into the mountain to be walled up with solid mason-work, so that Boabdil and his army might be completely corked up in their subterranean habitation. If the good father too," added the soldier, reverently bowing to the friar, and devoutly crossing himself, "would consecrate the barricadoes with his blessing, and put up a few crosses and reliques, and images of saints, I think they might withstand all the power of infidel enchantments."

"They doubtless would be of great avail," said the friar.

The governor now placed his arm akimbo, with his hand resting on the hilt of his toledo, fixed his eye upon the soldier, and gently wagging his head from one side to the other:

"So, friend," said he, "then you really suppose I am to be gulled with this cock-and-bull story about enchanted mountains and enchanted Moors. Hark ye, culprit!—not another word—an old soldier you may be, but you'll find you have an old soldier to deal with; and one not easily outgeneraled. Ho! guard there!—put this fellow in irons."

The demure handmaid would have put in a word in favor of the prisoner, but the governor silenced her with a look.

As they were pinioning the soldier one of the guards

felt something of bulk in his pocket, and drawing it forth found a long leathern purse that appeared to be well filled. Holding it by one corner, he turned out the contents on the table before the governor, and never did freebooter's bag make more gorgeous delivery. Out tumbled rings, and jewels, and rosaries of pearls, and sparkling diamond crosses, and a profusion of ancient golden coin, some of which fell jingling to the floor, and rolled away to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

For a time the functions of justice were suspended: there was a universal scramble after the glittering fugitives. The governor alone, who was imbued with true Spanish pride, maintained his stately decorum, though his eye betrayed a little anxiety until the last coin and jewel was restored to the sack.

The friar was not so calm; his whole face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes twinkled and flashed at sight of the rosaries and crosses.

"Sacriligious wretch that thou art," exclaimed he, "what church or sanctuary hast thou been plundering of these sacred reliques?"

"Neither one nor the other, holy father. If they be sacriligious spoils, they must have been taken in times long past by the infidel trooper I have mentioned. I was just going to tell his excellency, when he interrupted me, that on taking possession of the trooper's horse, I unhooked a leathern sack which hung at the saddle bow, and which, I presume, contained the plunder of his campaignings in days of old, when the Moors overran the country."

"Mighty well—at present you will make up your mind to take up your quarters in a chamber of the Vermilion Towers, which, though not under a magic spell, will hold you as safe as any cave of your enchanted Moors."

"Your excellency will do as you think proper," said the prisoner coolly. "I shall be thankful to your excellency for any accommodation in the fortress. A soldier who has been in the wars, as your excellency well knows, is not particular about his lodgings; and provided I have a snug dungeon and regular rations, I shall manage to make myself comfortable. I would only entreat that while your excellency is so careful about me, you would have an eye to your fortress, and think on the hint I

dropped about stopping up the entrances to the mountain."

Here ended the scene. The prisoner was conducted to a strong dungeon in the Vermilion Towers, the Arabian steed was led to his excellency's stable, and the trooper's sack was deposited in his excellency's strong box. To the latter, it is true, the friar made some demur, questioning whether the sacred reliques, which were evidently sacrilegious spoils, should not be placed in custody of the church; but as the governor was peremptory on the subject, and was absolute lord in the Alhambra, the friar discreetly dropped the discussion, but determined to convey intelligence of the fact to the church dignitaries in Granada.

To explain these prompt and rigid measures on the part of old Governor Manco, it is proper to observe that about this time the Alpuxarra Mountains in the neighborhood of Granada were terribly infected by a gang of robbers, under the command of a daring chief named Manuel Borasco, who were accustomed to prowl about the country, and even to enter the city in various disguises to gain intelligence of the departure of convoys of merchandise, or travelers with well-lined purses, whom they took care to waylay in distant and solitary passes of their road. These repeated and daring outrages had awakened the attention of government, and the commanders of the various posts had received instructions to be on the alert, and to take up all suspicious stragglers. Governor Manco was particularly zealous, in consequence of the various stigmas that had been cast upon his fortress, and he now doubted not that he had entrapped some formidable desperado of this gang.

In the meantime the story took wind, and became the talk not merely of the fortress, but of the whole city of Granada. It was said that the noted robber, Manuel Borasco, the terror of the Alpuxarras, had fallen into the clutches of old Governor Manco, and had been cooped up by him in a dungeon of the Vermilion Towers, and every one who had been robbed by him flocked to recognize the marauder. The Vermilion Towers, as is well known, stand apart from the Alhambra, on a sister hill separated from the main fortress by the ravine, down which passes the main avenue. There were no outer

walls, but a sentinel patrolled before the tower. The window of the chamber in which the soldier was confined was strongly grated, and looked upon a small esplanade. Here the good folks of Granada repaired to gaze at him, as they would at a laughing hyena grinning through the cage of a menagerie. Nobody, however, recognized him for Manuel Borasco, for that terrible robber was noted for a ferocious physiognomy, and had by no means the good-humored squint of the prisoner. Visitors came not merely from the city, but from all parts of the country, but nobody knew him, and there began to be doubts in the minds of the common people whether there might not be some truth in his story. That Boabdil and his army were shut up in the mountain, was an old tradition which many of the ancient inhabitants had heard from their fathers. Numbers went up to the Mountain of the Sun, or rather of St. Elena, in search of the cave mentioned by the soldier; and saw and peeped into the deep dark pit, descending, no one knows how far, into the mountain, and which remains there to this day, the fabled entrance to the subterranean abode of Boabdil.

By degrees the soldier became popular with the common people. A freebooter of the mountains is by no means the opprobrious character in Spain that a robber is in any other country; on the contrary, he is a kind of chivalrous personage in the eyes of the lower classes. There is always a disposition, also, to cavil at the conduct of those in command, and many began to murmur at the high-handed measures of old Governor Manco, and to look upon the prisoner in the light of a martyr.

The soldier, moreover, was a merry, waggish fellow, that had a joke for every one who came near his window, and a soft speech for every female. He had procured an old guitar also, and would sit by his window and sing ballads and love ditties to the delight of the women of the neighborhood, who would assemble on the esplanade in the evenings and dance boleros to his music. Having trimmed off his rough beard, his sunburnt face found favor in the eyes of the fair, and the demure handmaid of the governor declared that his squint was perfectly irresistible. This kind-hearted damsel had from the first evinced a deep sympathy in his fortunes, and having in vain tried to mollify the governor, had set to work

privately to mitigate the rigor of his dispensations. Every day she brought the prisoner some crumbs of comfort which had fallen from the governor's table or been abstracted from his larder, together with, now and then, a consoling bottle of choice Val de Peñas or rich Malaga.

While this petty treason was going on in the very center of the old governor's citadel, a storm of open war was brewing up among his external foes. The circumstance of a bag of gold and jewels having been found upon the person of the supposed robber had been reported with many exaggerations in Granada. A question of territorial jurisdiction was immediately started by the governor's inveterate rival, the captain-general. He insisted that the prisoner had been captured without the precincts of the Alhambra, and within the rules of his authority. He demanded his body, therefore, and the *spolia opima* taken with him. Due information having been carried likewise by the friar to the grand inquisitor, of the crosses, and the rosaries, and other reliques contained in the bag, he claimed the culprit, as having been guilty of sacrilege, and insisted that his plunder was due to the church, and his body to the next Auto da Fe. The feuds ran high; the governor was furious, and swore, rather than surrender his captive, he would hang him up within the Alhambra, as a spy caught within the purlieus of the fortress.

The captain-general threatened to send a body of soldiers to transfer the prisoner from the Vermilion Towers to the city. The grand inquisitor was equally bent upon dispatching a number of the familiars of the holy office. Word was brought late at night to the governor of these machinations. "Let them come," said he, "they'll find me beforehand with them. He must rise bright and early who would take in an old soldier." He accordingly issued orders to have the prisoner removed at daybreak to the Donjon Keep within the walls of the Alhambra: "And d'ye hear, child," said he to his demure handmaid, "tap at my door, and wake me before cock-crowing, that I may see to the matter myself."

The day dawned, the cock crowed, but nobody tapped at the door of the governor. The sun rose high above the mountain tops, and glittered in at his casement ere the governor was awakened from his morning dreams by

his veteran corporal, who stood before him, with terror stamped upon his iron visage.

“He’s off! he’s gone!” cried the corporal, gasping for breath.

“Who’s off?—who’s gone?”

“The soldier—the robber—the devil, for aught I know. His dungeon is empty, but the door locked. No one knows how he has escaped out of it.”

“Who saw him last?”

“Your handmaid—she brought him his supper.”

“Let her be called instantly.”

Here was new matter of confusion. The chamber of the demure damsel was likewise empty; her bed had not been slept in; she had doubtless gone off with the culprit, as she had appeared, for some days past, to have frequent conversations with him.

This was wounding the old governor in a tender part, but he had scarce time to wince at it when new misfortunes broke upon his view. On going into his cabinet, he found his strong box open, the leathern purse of the trooper extracted, and with it a couple of corpulent bags of doubloons.

But how and which way had the fugitives escaped? A peasant who lived in a cottage by the roadside leading up into the Sierra declared that he had heard the tramp of a powerful steed, just before daybreak, passing up into the mountains. He had looked out at his casement, and could just distinguish a horseman, with a female seated before him.

“Search the stables,” cried Governor Manco. The stables were searched; all the horses were in their stalls, excepting the Arabian steed. In his place was a stout cudgel tied to the manger, and on it a label bearing these words, “A gift to Governor Manco, from an old soldier.”

LEGEND OF THE TWO DISCREET STATUES.

THERE lived once, in a waste apartment of the Alhambra, a merry little fellow named Lope Sanchez, who worked in the gardens, and was as brisk and blithe as a grasshopper, singing all day long. He was the life and

soul of the fortress; when his work was over he would sit on one of the stone benches of the esplanade and strum his guitar, and sing long ditties about the Cid, and Bernardo del Carpio, and Fernando del Pulgar, and other Spanish heroes, for the amusement of the old soldiers of the fortress, or would strike up a merrier tune, and set the girls dancing boleros and fandangoes.

Like most little men, Lope Sanchez, had a strapping buxom dame for a wife, who could almost have put him in her pocket; but he lacked the usual poor man's lot—instead of ten children he had but one. This was a little black-eyed girl, about twelve years of age, named Sanchica, who was as merry as himself, and the delight of his heart. She played about him as he worked in the gardens, danced to his guitar as he sat in the shade, and ran as wild as a young fawn about the groves, and alleys, and ruined halls of the Alhambra.

It was now the eve of the blessed St. John, and the holiday-loving gossips of the Alhambra, men, women, and children, went up at night to the Mountain of the Sun, which rises above the Generaliffe, to keep their midsummer vigil on its level summit. It was a bright moonlight night, and all the mountains were gray and silvery, and the city, with its domes and spires, lay in shadows below, and the Vega was like a fairyland, with haunted streams gleaming among its dusky groves. On the highest part of the mountain they lit up a balefire, according to an old custom of the country handed down from the Moors. The inhabitants of the surrounding country were keeping a similar vigil, and balefires here and there in the Vega, and along the folds of the mountains, blazed up palely in the moonlight.

The evening was gayly passed in dancing to the guitar of Lope Sanchez, who was never so joyous as when on a holiday revel of the kind. While the dance was going on the little Sanchica with some of her playmates sported among the ruins of an old Moorish fort that crowns the mountain, when, in gathering pebbles in the fosse, she found a small hand, curiously carved of jet, the fingers closed, and the thumb firmly clasped upon them. Overjoyed with her good fortune, she ran to her mother with her prize. It immediately became a subject of sage speculation, and was eyed by some with supersti-

tious distrust. "Throw it away," said one, "it is Moorish—depend upon it there's mischief and witchcraft in it." "By no means," said another, "you may sell it for something to the jewelers of the Zacatin." In the midst of this discussion an old tawny soldier drew near, who had served in Africa, and was as swarthy as a Moor. He examined the hand with a knowing look. "I have seen things of this kind," said he, "among the Moors of Barbary. It is of great value to guard against the evil eye, and all kinds of spells and enchantments. I give you joy, friend Lope, this bodes good luck to your child."

Upon hearing this the wife of Lope Sanchez tied the little hand of jet to a ribbon, and hung it round the neck of her daughter.

The sight of this talisman called up all the favorite superstitions about the Moors. The dance was neglected, and they sat in groups on the ground, telling old legendary tales handed down from their ancestors. Some of their stories turned upon the wonders of the very mountain upon which they were seated, which is a famous hobgoblin region.

One ancient crone gave a long account of the subterranean palace in the bowels of that mountain, where Boabdil and all his Moslem court are said to remain enchanted. "Among yonder ruins," said she, pointing to some crumbling walls and mounds of earth on a distant part of the mountain, "there is a deep black pit that goes down, down into the very heart of the mountain. For all the money in Granada, I would not look down into it. Once upon a time, a poor man of the Alhambra, who tended goats upon this mountain, scrambled down into that pit after a kid that had fallen in. He came out again, all wild and staring, and told such things of what he had seen that every one thought his brain was turned. He raved for a day or two about hobgoblin Moors that had pursued him in the cavern, and could hardly be persuaded to drive his goats up again to the mountain. He did so at last, but, poor man, he never came down again. The neighbors found his goats browsing about the Moorish ruins, and his hat and mantle lying near the mouth of the pit, but he was never more heard of."

The little Sanchica listened with breathless attention

to this story. She was of a curious nature, and felt immediately a great hankering to peep into this dangerous pit. Stealing away from her companions, she sought the distant ruins, and after groping for some time among them, came to a small hollow or basin, near the brow of the mountain, where it swept steeply down into the valley of the Darro. In the center of this basin yawned the mouth of the pit. Sanchica ventured to the verge and peeped in. All was black as pitch, and gave an idea of immeasurable depth. Her blood ran cold—she drew back—then peeped again—then would have run away—then took another peep—the very horror of the thing was delightful to her. At length she rolled a large stone, and pushed it over the brink. For some time it fell in silence; then struck some rocky projection with a violent crash, then rebounded from side to side, rumbling and tumbling, with a noise like thunder, then made a final splash into water, far, far below, and all was again silent.

The silence, however, did not long continue. It seemed as if something had been awakened within this dreary abyss. A murmuring sound gradually rose out of the pit like the hum and buzz of a beehive. It grew louder and louder; there was the confusion of voices as of a distant multitude, together with the faint din of arms, clash of cymbals, and clangor of trumpets, as if some army were marshaling for battle in the very bowels of the mountain.

The child drew off with silent awe, and hastened back to the place where she had left her parents and their companions. All were gone. The balefire was expiring, and its last wreath of smoke curling up in the moonshine. The distant fires that had blazed along the mountains and in the Vega were all extinguished; everything seemed to have sunk to repose. Sanchica called her parents and some of her companions by name, but received no reply. She ran down the side of the mountain, and by the gardens of the Generaliffe, until she arrived in the alley of trees leading to the Alhambra, where she seated herself on a bench of a woody recess to recover breath. The bell from the watch-tower of the Alhambra told midnight. There was a deep tranquillity, as if all nature slept; excepting the low tinkling sound

of an unseen stream that ran under the covert of the bushes. The breathing sweetness of the atmosphere was lulling her to sleep, when her eye was caught by something glittering at a distance, and to her surprise, she beheld a long cavalcade of Moorish warriors pouring down the mountain side, and along the leafy avenues. Some were armed with lances and shields; others with scimitars and battle-axes, and with polished cuirasses that flashed in the moonbeams. Their horses pranced proudly, and champed upon the bit, but their tramp caused no more sound than if they had been shod with felt, and the riders were all as pale as death. Among them rode a beautiful lady with a crowned head and long golden locks entwined with pearls. The housings of her palfrey were of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and swept the earth; but she rode all disconsolate, with eyes ever fixed upon the ground.

Then succeeded a train of courtiers magnificently arrayed in robes and turbans of divers colors, and amid these, on a cream-colored charger, rode King Boabdil el Chico, in a royal mantle covered with jewels, and a crown sparkling with diamonds. The little Sanchica knew him by his yellow beard, and his resemblance to his portrait, which she had often seen in the picture gallery of the Generaliffe. She gazed in wonder and admiration at this royal pageant as it passed glistening among the trees, but though she knew these monarchs, and courtiers, and warriors, so pale and silent, were out of the common course of nature, and things of magic or enchantment, yet she looked on with a bold heart, such courage did she derive from the mystic talisman of the hand which was suspended about her neck.

The cavalcade having passed by, she rose and followed. It continued on to the great gate of Justice, which stood wide open; the old invalid sentinels on duty lay on the stone benches of the barbican, buried in profound and apparently charmed sleep, and the phantom pageant swept noiselessly by them with flaunting banner and triumphant state. Sanchica would have followed, but, to her surprise, she beheld an opening in the earth within the barbican, leading down beneath the foundations of the tower. She entered for a little distance, and was encouraged to proceed by finding steps rudely hewn

in the rock, and a vaulted passage here and there lit up by a silver lamp, which, while it gave light, diffused likewise a grateful fragrance. Venturing on, she came at last to a great hall wrought out of the heart of the mountain, magnificently furnished in the Moorish style, and lighted up by silver and crystal lamps. Here on an ottoman sat an old man in Moorish dress, with a long white beard, nodding and dozing, with a staff in his hand, which seemed ever to be slipping from his grasp; while at a little distance sat a beautiful lady in ancient Spanish dress, with a coronet all sparkling with diamonds, and her hair entwined with pearls, who was softly playing on a silver lyre. The little Sanchica now recollected a story she had heard among the old people of the Alhambra, concerning a Gothic princess confined in the center of the mountain by an old Arabian magician, whom she kept bound up in magic sleep by the power of music.

The lady paused with surprise at seeing a mortal in that enchanted hall. "Is it the eve of the blessed St. John?" said she.

"It is," replied Sanchica.

"Then for one night the magic charm is suspended. Come hither, child, and fear not, I am a Christian like thyself, though bound here by enchantment. Touch my fetters with the talisman that hangs about thy neck, and for this night I shall be free."

So saying she opened her robes and displayed a broad golden band round her waist, and a golden chain that fastened her to the ground. The child hesitated not to apply the little hand of jet to the golden band, and immediately the chain fell to the earth. At the sound the old man awoke and began to rub his eyes, but the lady ran her fingers over the chords of the lyre, and again he fell into a slumber and began to nod, and his staff to falter in his hand. "Now," said the lady, "touch his staff with the talismanic hand of jet." The child did so, and it fell from his grasp, and he sank in a deep sleep on the ottoman. The lady gently laid the silver lyre on the ottoman, leaning it against the head of the sleeping magician, then touching the chords until they vibrated in his ear, "O potent spirit of harmony," said she, "continue thus to hold his senses in thralldom till

the return of day." "Now follow me, my child," continued she, "and thou shalt behold the Alhambra as it was in the days of its glory, for thou hast a magic talisman that reveals all enchantments." Sanchica followed the lady in silence. They passed up through the entrance of the cavern into the barbican of the gate of Justice, and thence to the Plaza de las Algibes, or esplanade within the fortress. This was all filled with Moorish soldiery, horse and foot, marshaled in squadrons, with banners displayed. There were royal guards also at the portal, and rows of African blacks with drawn scimitars. No one spoke a word, and Sanchica passed on fearlessly after her conductor. Her astonishment increased on entering the royal palace, in which she had been reared. The broad moonshine lit up all the halls, and courts, and gardens, almost as brightly as if it were day; but revealed a far different scene from that to which she was accustomed. The walls of the apartments were no longer stained and rent by time. Instead of cobwebs, they were now hung with rich silks of Damascus, and the gildings and arabesque paintings were restored to their original brilliancy and freshness. The halls, instead of being naked and unfurnished, were set out with divans and ottomans of the rarest stuffs, embroidered with pearls and studded with precious gems, and all the fountains in the courts and gardens were playing.

The kitchens were again in full operation; cooks were busied preparing shadowy dishes, and roasting and boiling the phantoms of pullets and partridges; servants were hurrying to and fro with silver dishes heaped up with dainties, and arranging a delicious banquet. The Court of Lions was thronged with guards, and courtiers, and alfaquis, as in the old times of the Moors; and at the upper end, in the saloon of judgment, sat Boabdil on his throne, surrounded by his court, and swaying a shadowy scepter for the night.

Notwithstanding all this throng and seeming bustle, not a voice or footstep was to be heard; nothing interrupted the midnight silence but the plashing of the fountains. The little Sanchica followed her conductress in mute amazement about the palace, until they came to a portal opening to the vaulted passages beneath the great tower of Comares. On each side of the portal sat

the figure of a nymph, wrought out of alabaster. Their heads were turned aside, and their regards fixed upon the same spot within the vault. The enchanted lady paused, and beckoned the child to her. "Here," said she, "is a great secret, which I will reveal to thee in reward for thy faith and courage. These discreet statues watch over a mighty treasure hidden in old times by a Moorish king. Tell thy father to search the spot on which their eyes are fixed, and he will find what will make him richer than any man in Granada. Thy innocent hands alone, however, gifted as thou art also with the talisman, can remove the treasure. Bid thy father use it discreetly, and devote a part of it to the performance of daily masses for my deliverance from this unholy enchantment."

When the lady had spoken these words she led the child onward to the little garden of Lindaraxa, which is hard by the vault of the statues. The moon trembled upon the waters of the solitary fountain in the center of the garden, and shed a tender light upon the orange and citron trees. The beautiful lady plucked a branch of myrtle and wreathed it round the head of the child. "Let this be a memento," said she, "of what I have revealed to thee, and a testimonial of its truth. My hour is come—I must return to the enchanted hall; follow me not, lest evil befall thee; farewell, remember what I have said, and have masses performed for my deliverance." So saying, the lady entered a dark passage leading beneath the towers of Comares, and was no longer to be seen.

The faint crowing of a cock was now heard from the cottages below the Alhambra, in the valley of the Darro, and a pale streak of light began to appear above the eastern mountains. A slight wind arose; there was a sound like the rustling of dry leaves through the courts and corridors, and door after door shut to with a jarring sound. Sanchica returned to the scenes she had so lately beheld thronged with the shadowy multitude, but Boabdil and his phantom court were gone.

The moon shone into empty halls and galleries stripped of their transient splendor, stained and dilapidated by time, and hung with cobwebs; the bat flitted about in the uncertain light, and the frog croaked from the fish-pond.

Sanchica now made the best of her way to a remote staircase that led up to the humble apartment occupied by her family. The door as usual was open, for Lope Sanchez was too poor to need bolt or bar: she crept quietly to her pallet, and, putting the myrtle wreath beneath her pillow, soon fell asleep.

In the morning she related all that had befallen her to her father. Lope Sanchez, however, treated the whole as a mere dream, and laughed at the child for her credulity. He went forth to his customary labors in the garden, but had not been there long when his little daughter came running to him almost breathless. "Father! father!" cried she, "behold the myrtle wreath which the Moorish lady bound round my head."

Lope Sanchez gazed with astonishment, for the stalk of the myrtle was of pure gold, and every leaf was a sparkling emerald! Being not much accustomed to precious stones, he was ignorant of the real value of the wreath, but he saw enough to convince him that it was something more substantial than the stuff that dreams are generally made of, and that at any rate the child had dreamed to some purpose. His first care was to enjoin the most absolute secrecy upon his daughter; in this respect, however, he was secure, for she had discretion far beyond her years or sex. He then repaired to the vault where stood the statues of the two alabaster nymphs. He remarked that their heads were turned from the portal, and that the regards of each were fixed upon the same point in the interior of the building. Lope Sanchez could not but admire this most discreet contrivance for guarding a secret. He drew a line from the eyes of the statues to the point of regard, made a private mark on the wall, and then retired.

All day, however, the mind of Lope Sanchez was distracted with a thousand cares. He could not help hovering within distant view of the two statues, and became nervous from the dread that the golden secret might be discovered. Every footstep that approached the place made him tremble. He would have given anything could he but turn the heads of the statues, forgetting that they had looked precisely in the same direction for some hundreds of years, without any person being the wiser. "A plague upon them," he would say to himself,

“they’ll betray all. Did ever mortal hear of such a mode of guarding a secret!” Then, on hearing any one advance he would steal off, as though his very lurking near the place would awaken suspicions. Then he would return cautiously, and peep from a distance to see if everything was secure, but the sight of the statues would again call forth his indignation. “Ay, there they stand,” would he say, “always looking, and looking, and looking, just where they should not. Confound them! they are just like all their sex; if they have not tongues to tattle with, they’ll be sure to do it with their eyes!”

At length, to his relief, the long anxious day drew to a close. The sound of footsteps was no longer heard in the echoing halls of the Alhambra; the last stranger passed the threshold, the great portal was barred and bolted, and the bat, and the frog, and the hooting owl gradually resumed their nightly vocations in the deserted palace.

Lope Sanchez waited, however, until the night was far advanced, before he ventured with his little daughter to the hall of the two nymphs. He found them looking as knowingly and mysteriously as ever at the secret place of deposit. “By your leaves, gentle ladies,” thought Lope Sanchez as he passed between them, “I will relieve you from this charge that must have set so heavy in your minds for the last two or three centuries.” He accordingly went to work at the part of the wall which he had marked, and in a little while laid open a concealed recess, in which stood two great jars of porcelain. He attempted to draw them forth, but they were immovable until touched by the innocent hand of his little daughter. With her aid he dislodged them from their niche, and found to his great joy that they were filled with pieces of Moorish gold, mingled with jewels and precious stones. Before daylight he managed to convey them to his chamber, and left the two guardian statues with their eyes still fixed on the vacant wall.

Lope Sanchez had thus on a sudden become a rich man, but riches, as usual, brought a world of cares, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. How was he to convey away his wealth with safety? How was he even to enter upon the enjoyment of it without awakening suspicion? Now, too, for the first time in his life, the

dread of robbers entered into his mind. He looked with terror at the insecurity of his habitation, and went to work to barricade the doors and windows; yet after all his precautions, he could not sleep soundly. His usual gayety was at an end; he had no longer a joke or a song for his neighbors, and, in short, became the most miserable animal in the Alhambra. His old comrades remarked this alteration; pitied him heartily, and began to desert him, thinking he must be falling into want, and in danger of looking to them for assistance; little did they suspect that his only calamity was riches.

The wife of Lope Sanchez shared his anxiety; but then she had ghostly comfort. We ought before this to have mentioned that Lope being rather a light, inconsiderate little man, his wife was accustomed, in all grave matters, to seek the counsel and ministry of her confessor, Fray Simon, a sturdy, broad-shouldered, blue-bearded, bullet-headed friar of the neighboring convent of San Francisco, who was, in fact, the spiritual comforter of half the good wives of the neighborhood. He was, moreover, in great esteem among divers sisterhoods of nuns, who requited him for his ghostly services by frequent presents of those little dainties and knickknacks manufactured in convents, such as delicate confections, sweet biscuits, and bottles of spiced cordials, found to be marvelous restoratives after fasts and vigils.

Fray Simon thrived in the exercise of his functions. His oily skin glistened in the sunshine as he toiled up the hill of the Alhambra on a sultry day. Yet notwithstanding his sleek condition, the knotted rope round his waist showed the austerity of his self-discipline; the multitude doffed their caps to him as a mirror of piety, and even the dogs scented the odor of sanctity that exhaled from his garments, and howled from their kennels as he passed.

Such was Fray Simon, the spiritual counselor of the comely wife of Lope Sanchez, and as the father confessor is the domestic confidant of women in humble life in Spain, he was soon made acquainted, in great secrecy, with the story of the hidden treasure.

The friar opened eyes and mouth, and crossed himself a dozen times at the news. After a moment's pause, "Daughter of my soul!" said he, "know that thy hus-

band has committed a double sin, a sin against both state and church! The treasure he has thus seized upon for himself, being found in the royal domains, belongs of course to the crown; but being infidel wealth, rescued, as it were, from the very fangs of Satan, should be devoted to the church. Still, however, the matter may be accommodated. Bring hither the myrtle wreath."

When the good father beheld it his eyes twinkled more than ever, with admiration of the size and beauty of the emeralds. "This," said he, "being the first fruits of this discovery, should be dedicated to pious purposes. I will hang it up as a votive offering before the image of San Francisco in our chapel, and will earnestly pray to him, this very night, that your husband be permitted to remain in quiet possession of your wealth."

The good dame was delighted to make her peace with Heaven at so cheap a rate, and the friar, putting the wreath under his mantle, departed with saintly steps toward his convent.

When Lope Sanchez came home his wife told him what had passed. He was excessively provoked, for he lacked his wife's devotion, and had for some time groaned in secret at the domestic visitations of the friar. "Woman," said he, "what hast thou done! Thou hast put everything at hazard by thy tattling."

"What!" cried the good woman, "would you forbid my disburdening my conscience to my confessor?"

"No, wife! confess as many of your own sins as you please; but as to this money-digging, it is a sin of my own, and my conscience is very easy under the weight of it."

There was no use, however, in complaining; the secret was told, and, like water spilled on the sand, was not again to be gathered. Their only chance was, that the friar would be discreet.

The next day, while Lope Sanchez was abroad, there was an humble knocking at the door, and Fray Simon entered with meek and demure countenance.

"Daughter," said he, "I have prayed earnestly to San Francisco, and he has heard my prayer. In the dead of the night the saint appeared to me in a dream, but with a frowning aspect. 'Why,' said he, 'dost thou pray to me to dispense with this treasure of the Gentiles, when

thou seest the poverty of my chapel? Go to the house of Lope Sanchez, crave in my name a portion of the Moorish gold to furnish two candlesticks for the main altar, and let him possess the residue in peace."

When the good woman heard of this vision she crossed herself with awe, and going to the secret place where Lope had hid the treasure, she filled a great leathern purse with pieces of Moorish gold, and gave it to the friar. The pious monk bestowed upon her in return benedictions enough, if paid by Heaven, to enrich her race to the latest posterity; then slipping the purse into the sleeve of his habit, he folded his hands upon his breast, and departed with an air of humble thankfulness.

When Lope Sanchez heard of this second donation to the church he had well-nigh lost his senses. "Unfortunate man," cried he, "what will become of me? I shall be robbed by piecemeal; I shall be ruined and brought to beggary!"

It was with the utmost difficulty that his wife could pacify him by reminding him of the countless wealth that yet remained; and how considerate it was for San Francisco to rest contented with so very small a portion.

Unluckily, Fray Simon had a number of poor relations to be provided for, not to mention some half-dozen sturdy, bullet-headed orphan children and destitute foundlings that he had taken under his care. He repeated his visits, therefore, from day to day, with salutations on behalf of Saint Dominick, Saint Andrew, Saint James, until poor Lope was driven to despair, and found that, unless he got out of the reach of this holy friar, he should have to make peace offerings to every saint in the calendar. He determined, therefore, to pack up his remaining wealth, beat a secret retreat in the night, and make off to another part of the kingdom.

Full of his project, he bought a stout mule for the purpose, and tethered it in a gloomy vault underneath the tower of the Seven Floors—the very place from whence the Bellado, or goblin horse without a head, is said to issue forth at midnight and to scour the streets of Granada, pursued by a pack of hell-hounds. Lope Sanchez had little faith in the story, but availed himself of the dread occasioned by it, knowing that no one would be likely to pry into the subterranean stable of the

phantom steed. He sent off his family in the course of the day, with orders to wait for him at a distant village of the Vega. As the night advanced he conveyed his treasure to the vault under the tower, and having loaded his mule, he led it forth and cautiously descended the dusky avenue.

Honest Lope had taken his measures with the utmost secrecy, imparting them to no one but the faithful wife of his bosom. By some miraculous revelation, however, they became known to Fray Simon; the zealous friar beheld these infidel treasures on the point of slipping forever out of his grasp and determined to have one more dash at them for the benefit of the church and San Francisco. Accordingly, when the bells had rung for animas and all the Alhambra was quiet, he stole out of his convent and, descending through the gate of Justice, concealed himself among the thickets of roses and laurels that border the great avenue. Here he remained counting the quarters of hours as they were sounded on the bell of the watch-tower, and listening to the dreary hootings of owls, and the distant barking of dogs from the gypsy caverns.

At length he heard the tramp of hoofs, and through the gloom of the overshadowing trees imperfectly beheld a steed descending the avenue. The sturdy friar chuckled at the idea of the knowing turn he was about to serve honest Lope. Tucking up the skirts of his habit and wriggling like a cat watching a mouse, he waited until his prey was directly before him, when darting forth from his leafy covert, and putting one hand on the shoulder and the other on the crupper, he made a vault that would not have disgraced the most experienced master of equitation, and alighted well forked astride the steed. "Aha!" said the sturdy friar, "we shall now see who best understands the game."

He had scarce uttered the words, when the mule began to kick and rear and plunge, and then set off at full speed down the hill. The friar attempted to check him, but in vain. He bounded from rock to rock, and bush to bush; the friar's habit was torn to ribbons, and fluttered in the wind; his shaven poll received many a hard knock from the branches of the trees, and many a scratch from the brambles. To add to his terror and distress,

he found a pack of seven hounds in full cry at his heels, and perceived, too late, that he was actually mounted upon the terrible Bellado!

Away they went, according to the ancient phrase, "pull devil, pull friar," down the great avenue, across the Plaza Nueva, along the Zacatin, around the Vivarambla—never did huntsman and hound make a more furious run or more infernal uproar.

In vain did the friar invoke every saint in the calendar, and the holy virgin into the bargain; every time he mentioned a name of the kind it was like a fresh application of the spur, and made the Bellado bound as high as a house. Through the remainder of the night was the unlucky Fray Simon carried hither and thither and whither he would not, until every bone in his body ached, and he suffered a loss of leather too grievous to be mentioned. At length the crowing of a cock gave the signal of returning day. At the sound the goblin steed wheeled about and galloped back for his tower. Again he scoured the Vivarambla, the Zacatin, the Plaza Nueva, and the avenue of fountains, the seven dogs yelling and barking, and leaping up, and snapping at the heels of the terrified friar. The first streak of day had just appeared as they reached the tower; here the goblin steed kicked up his heels, sent the friar a somersault through the air, plunged into the dark vault followed by the infernal pack, and a profound silence succeeded to the late deafening clamor.

Was ever so diabolical a trick played off upon holy friar? A peasant going to his labors at early dawn found the unfortunate Fray Simon lying under a fig-tree at the foot of the tower, but so bruised and bedeviled that he could neither speak nor move. He was conveyed with all care and tenderness to his cell, and the story went that he had been waylaid and maltreated by robbers. A day or two elapsed before he recovered the use of his limbs: he consoled himself in the meantime with the thought that though the mule with the treasure had escaped him he had previously had some rare pickings at the infidel spoils. His first care on being able to use his limbs was to search beneath his pallet, where he had secreted the myrtle wreath and the leathern pouches of gold, extracted from the piety of Dame Sanchez. What

was his dismay at finding the wreath in effect but a withered branch of myrtle, and the leathern pouches filled with sand and gravel!

Fray Simon, with all his chagrin, had the discretion to hold his tongue, for to betray the secret might draw on him the ridicule of the public and the punishment of his superior; it was not until many years afterward on his deathbed that he revealed to his confessor his nocturnal ride on the Bellado.

Nothing was heard of Lope Sanchez for a long time after his disappearance from the Alhambra. His memory was always cherished as that of a merry companion, though it was feared from the care and melancholy shown in his conduct shortly before his mysterious departure that poverty and distress had driven him to some extremity. Some years afterward one of his old companions, an invalid soldier, being at Malaga was knocked down and nearly run over by a coach and six. The carriage stopped; an old gentleman magnificently dressed, with a bag-wig and sword, stepped out to assist the poor invalid. What was the astonishment of the latter to behold in this grand cavalier his old friend Lope Sanchez, who was actually celebrating the marriage of his daughter Sanchica with one of the first grandees in the land.

The carriage contained the bridal party. There was Dame Sanchez, now grown as round as a barrel and dressed out with feathers and jewels, and necklaces of pearls, and necklaces of diamonds, and rings on every finger, and altogether a finery of apparel that had not been seen since the days of Queen Sheba. The little Sanchica had now grown to be a woman, and for grace and beauty might have been mistaken for a duchess, if not a princess outright. The bridegroom sat beside her, rather a withered, spindle-shanked little man, but this only proved him to be of the true blue blood, a legitimate Spanish grandee being rarely above three cubits in stature. The match had been of the mother's making.

Riches had not spoiled the heart of honest Lope. He kept his old comrade with him for several days, feasted him like a king, took him to plays and bull-fights, and at length sent him away rejoicing, with a big bag of money for himself and another to be distributed among his ancient messmates of the Alhambra.

Lope always gave out that a rich brother had died in America and left him heir to a copper mine, but the shrewd gossips of the Alhambra insist that his wealth was all derived from his having discovered the secret guarded by the two marble nymphs of the Alhambra. It is remarked that these very discreet statues continue even unto the present day with their eyes fixed most significantly on the same part of the wall, which leads many to suppose there is still some hidden treasure remaining there well worthy the attention of the enterprising traveler. Though others, and particularly all female visitors, regard them with great complacency as lasting monuments of the fact that women can keep a secret.

MAHAMAD ABEN ALAHMAR:

THE FOUNDER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

HAVING dealt so freely in the marvelous legends of the Alhambra, I feel as if bound to give the reader a few facts concerning its sober history, or rather the history of those magnificent princes, its founder and finisher, to whom Europe is indebted for so beautiful and romantic an Oriental monument. To attain these facts I descended from this region of fancy and fiction, where everything is liable to take an imaginative tint, and carried my researches among the dusty tomes of the old Jesuit's library in the university. This once boasted repository of erudition is now a mere shadow of its former self, having been stripped of its manuscripts and rarest works by the French, while masters of Granada. Still it contains, among many ponderous tomes of polemics of the Jesuit fathers, several curious tracts of Spanish literature, and above all, a number of those antiquated, dusty, parchment-bound chronicles for which I have a peculiar veneration.

In this old library I have passed many delightful hours of quiet, undisturbed literary foraging, for the keys of the doors and bookcases were kindly intrusted to me, and I was left alone to rummage at my leisure—a rare indulgence in those sanctuaries of learning, which too

often tantalize the thirsty student with the sight of sealed fountains of knowledge.

In the course of these visits I gleaned the following particulars concerning the historical characters in question.

The Moors of Granada regarded the Alhambra as a miracle of art, and had a tradition that the king who founded it dealt in magic, or at least was deeply versed in alchemy, by means of which he procured the immense sums of gold expended in its erection. A brief view of his reign will show the real secret of his wealth.

The name of this monarch, as inscribed on the walls of some of the apartments, was Aben Abd'allah (*i.e.*, the father of Abdallah), but he is commonly known in Moorish history as Mahamad Aben Alahmar (or Mahamad son of Alahmar), or simply Aben Alahmar, for the sake of brevity.

He was born in Arjona in the year of the Hegira 591, of the Christian era 1195, of the noble family of the Beni Nasar, or children of Nasar, and no expense was spared by his parents to fit him for the high station to which the opulence and dignity of his family entitled him. The Saracens of Spain were greatly advanced in civilization. Every principal city was a seat of learning and the arts, so that it was easy to command the most enlightened instructors for a youth of rank and fortune. Aben Alahmar, when he arrived at manly years, was appointed Alcaide or governor of Arjona and Jaen, and gained great popularity by his benignity and justice. Some years afterward, on the death of Aben Hud, the Moorish power of Spain was broken into factions, and many places delared for Mahamad Aben Alahmar. Being of a sanguine spirit and lofty ambition, he seized upon the occasion, made a circuit through the country, and was everywhere received with acclamation. It was in the year 1238 that he entered Granada amid the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. He was proclaimed king with every demonstration of joy, and soon become the head of the Moslems in Spain, being the first of the illustrious line of Beni Nasar that had sat upon the throne.

His reign was such as to render him a blessing to his subjects. He gave the command of his various cities to

such as had distinguished themselves by valor and prudence, and who seemed most acceptable to the people. He organized a vigilant police and established rigid rules for the administration of justice. The poor and the distressed always found ready admission to his presence, and he attended personally to their assistance and redress. He erected hospitals for the blind, the aged, and infirm, and all those incapable of labor, and visited them frequently, not on set days, with pomp and form, so as to give time for everything to be put in order and every abuse concealed, but suddenly and unexpectedly, informing himself by actual observation and close inquiry of the treatment of the sick and the conduct of those appointed to administer to their relief.

He founded schools and colleges, which he visited in the same manner, inspecting personally the instruction of the youth. He established butcheries and public ovens, that the people might be furnished with wholesome provisions at just and regular prices. He introduced abundant streams of water into the city, erecting baths and fountains, and constructing aqueducts and canals to irrigate and fertilize the Vega. By these means prosperity and abundance prevailed in this beautiful city, its gates were thronged with commerce, and its warehouses filled with the luxuries and merchandise of every clime and country.

While Mahamad Aben Alahmar was ruling his fair domains thus wisely and prosperously, he was suddenly menaced by the horrors of war. The Christians at that time, profiting by the dismemberment of the Moslem power, were rapidly regaining their ancient territories. James the Conqueror had subjected all Valentia, and Ferdinand the Saint was carrying his victorious armies into Andalusia. The latter invested the city of Jaen, and swore not to raise his camp until he had gained possession of the place. Mahamad Aben Alahmar was conscious of the insufficiency of his means to carry on a war with the potent sovereign of Castile. Taking a sudden resolution, therefore, he repaired privately to the Christian camp, and made his unexpected appearance in the presence of King Ferdinand. "In me," said he, "you behold Mahamad, King of Granada. I confide in your good faith, and put myself under your protection.

Take all I possess, and receive me as your vassal." So saying, he knelt and kissed the king's hand in token of submission.

King Ferdinand was touched by this instance of confiding faith, and determined not to be outdone in generosity. He raised his late rival from the earth and embraced him as a friend, nor would he accept the wealth he offered, but received him as a vassal, leaving him sovereign of his dominions, on condition of paying a yearly tribute, attending the cortes as one of the nobles of the empire, and serving him in war with a certain number of horsemen.

It was not long after this that Mahamad was called upon for his military services, to aid King Ferdinand in his famous siege of Seville. The Moorish king sallied forth with five hundred chosen horsemen of Granada, than whom none in the world knew better how to manage the steed or wield the lance. It was a melancholy and humiliating service, however, for they had to draw the sword against their brethren of the faith. Mahamad gained a melancholy distinction by his prowess in this renowned conquest, but more true honor by the humanity which he prevailed upon Ferdinand to introduce into the usages of war. When, in 1248, the famous city of Seville surrendered to the Castilian monarch, Mahamad returned sad and full of care to his dominions. He saw the gathering ills that menaced the Moslem cause, and uttered an ejaculation often used by him in moments of anxiety and trouble: "How straitened and wretched would be our life, if our hope were not so spacious and extensive." *

When the melancholy conqueror approached his beloved Granada the people thronged forth to see him with impatient joy, for they loved him as a benefactor. They had erected arches of triumph in honor of his martial exploits, and wherever he passed he was hailed with acclamations, as *El Galib*, or the conqueror; Mahamad shook his head when he heard the appellation, "*Wa le Galib ilé Alá*," exclaimed he (there is no conqueror but God!). From that time forward he adopted this excla-

* "Que angoste y miserable seria nuestra vida, sino fuera tan dilatada y espaciosa nuestra esperanza!"

mation as a motto. He inscribed it on an oblique band across his escutcheon, and it continued to be the motto of his descendants.

Mahamad had purchased peace by submission to the Christian yoke, but he knew that where the elements were so discordant and the motives for hostility so deep and ancient, it could not be secure or permanent. Acting therefore upon an old maxim, "Arm thyself in peace and clothe thyself in summer," he improved the present interval of tranquillity by fortifying his dominions and replenishing his arsenals, and by promoting those useful arts which give wealth and real power to an empire. He gave premiums and privileges to the best artisans; improved the breed of horses and other domestic animals; encouraged husbandry; and increased the natural fertility of the soil twofold by his protection, making the lonely valleys of his kingdom to bloom like gardens. He fostered also the growth and fabrication of silk, until the looms of Granada surpassed even those of Syria in the fineness and beauty of their productions. He moreover caused the mines of gold and silver, and other metals found in the mountainous regions of his dominions, to be diligently worked, and was the first king of Granada who struck money of gold and silver with his name, taking great care that the coins should be skillfully executed.

It was about this time, toward the middle of the thirteenth century, and just after his return from the siege of Seville, that he commenced the splendid palace of the Alhambra: superintending the building of it in person, mingling frequently among the artists and workmen and directing their labors.

Though thus magnificent in his works and great in his enterprises, he was simple in his person and moderate in his enjoyments. His dress was not merely void of splendor, but so plain as not to distinguish him from his subjects. His harem boasted but few beauties, and these he visited but seldom, though they were entertained with great magnificence. His wives were daughters of the principal nobles, and were treated by him as friends and rational companions, what is more, he managed to make them live as friends with one another.

He passed much of his time in his gardens; especially

in those of the Alhambra, which he had stored with the rarest plants and the most beautiful and aromatic flowers. Here he delighted himself in reading histories, or in causing them to be read and related to him; and sometimes, in intervals of leisure, employed himself in the instruction of his three sons, for whom he had provided the most learned and virtuous masters.

As he had frankly and voluntarily offered himself a tributary vassal to Ferdinand, so he always remained loyal to his word, giving him repeated proofs of fidelity and attachment. When that renowned monarch died in Seville, in 1254, Mahamad Aben Alahmar sent ambassadors to condole with his successor, Alonzo X., and with them a gallant train of a hundred Moorish cavaliers of distinguished rank, who were to attend, each bearing a lighted taper round the royal bier, during the funeral ceremonies. This grand testimonial of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch during the remainder of his life, on each anniversary of the death of King Fernando el Santo, when the hundred Moorish knights repaired from Granada to Seville, and took their stations with lighted tapers in the center of the sumptuous cathedral round the cenotaph of the illustrious deceased.

Mahamad Aben Alahmar retained his faculties and vigor to an advanced age. In his seventy-ninth year he took the field on horseback, accompanied by the flower of his chivalry, to resist an invasion of his territories. As the army sallied forth from Granada one of the principal adalides or guides, who rode in the advance, accidentally broke his lance against the arch of the gate. The counselors of the king, alarmed by this circumstance, which was considered an evil omen, entreated him to return. Their supplications were in vain. The king persisted, and at noontide the omen, say the Moorish chroniclers, was fatally fulfilled. Mahamad was suddenly struck with illness, and had nearly fallen from his horse. He was placed on a litter and borne back toward Granada, but his illness increased to such a degree that they were obliged to pitch his tent in the Vega. His physicians were filled with consternation, not knowing what remedy to prescribe. In a few hours he died vomiting blood, and in violent convulsions. The Castilian prince, Don Philip, brother of Alonzo X., was by

his side when he expired. His body was embalmed, inclosed in a silver coffin, and buried in the Alhambra, in a sepulcher of precious marble, amid the unfeigned lamentations of his subjects, who bewailed him as a parent.

Such was the enlightened patriot prince who founded the Alhambra, whose name remains emblazoned among its most delicate and graceful ornaments, and whose memory is calculated to inspire the loftiest associations in those who tread these fading scenes of his magnificence and glory. Though his undertakings were vast and his expenditures immense, yet his treasury was always full; and this seeming contradiction gave rise to the story that he was versed in magic art and possessed of the secret for transmuting baser metals into gold.

Those who have attended to his domestic policy, as here set forth, will easily understand the natural magic and simple alchemy which made his ample treasury to overflow.

JUSEF ABUL HAGIAS:

THE FINISHER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

BENEATH the governor's apartment in the Alhambra is the royal mosque, where the Moorish monarchs performed their private devotions. Though consecrated as a Catholic chapel, it still bears traces of its Moslem origin; the Saracenic columns with their gilded capitals, and the latticed gallery for the females of the harem, may yet be seen, and the escutcheons of the Moorish kings are mingled on the walls with those of the Castilian sovereigns.

In this consecrated place perished the illustrious Jusef Abul Hagias, the high-minded prince who completed the Alhambra, and who, for his virtues and endowments, deserves almost equal renown with its magnanimous founder. It is with pleasure I draw forth from the obscurity in which it has too long remained the name of another of those princes of a departed and almost forgotten race, who reigned in elegance and splendor in Andalusia, when all Europe was in comparative barbarism.

Jusef Abul Hagias (or, as it is sometimes written, Haxis) ascended the throne of Granada in the year 1333, and his personal appearance and mental qualities were such as to win all hearts and to awaken anticipations of a beneficent and prosperous reign. He was of a noble presence and great bodily strength, united to manly beauty. His complexion was exceeding fair, and according to the Arabian chroniclers, he heightened the gravity and majesty of his appearance by suffering his beard to grow to a dignified length, and dyeing it black. He had an excellent memory, well stored with science and erudition; he was of a lively genius, and accounted the best poet of his time, and his manners were gentle, affable, and urbane.

Jusef possessed the courage common to all generous spirits, but his genius was more calculated for peace than war, and, though obliged to take up arms repeatedly in his time, he was generally unfortunate. He carried the benignity of his nature into warfare, prohibiting all wanton cruelty, and enjoining mercy and protection toward women and children, the aged and infirm, and all friars and persons of holy and recluse life. Among other ill-starred enterprises, he undertook a great campaign in conjunction with the king of Morocco, against the kings of Castile and Portugal, but was defeated in the memorable battle of Salado—a disastrous reverse which had nearly proved a deathblow to the Moslem power in Spain.

Jusef obtained a long truce after this defeat, during which time he devoted himself to the instruction of his people and the improvement of their morals and manners. For this purpose he established schools in all the villages, with simple and uniform systems of education; he obliged every hamlet of more than twelve houses to have a mosque, and prohibited various abuses and indecorums that had been introduced into the ceremonies of religion and the festivals and public amusements of the people. He attended vigilantly to the police of the city, establishing nocturnal guards and patrols, and superintending all municipal concerns.

His attention was also directed toward finishing the great architectural works commenced by his predecessors, and erecting others on his own plans. The Alham-

bra, which had been founded by the good Aben Alahmar, was now completed. Jusef constructed the beautiful gate of Justice, forming the grand entrance to the fortress, which he finished in 1348. He likewise adorned many of the courts and halls of the palace, as may be seen by the inscriptions on the walls, in which his name repeatedly occurs. He built also the noble Alcazar, or citadel of Malaga; now unfortunately a mere mass of crumbling ruins, but which probably exhibited in its interior similar elegance and magnificence with the Alhambra.

The genius of a sovereign stamps a character upon his time. The nobles of Granada, imitating the elegant and graceful taste of Jusef, soon filled the city of Granada with magnificent palaces, the halls of which were paved in mosaic, the walls and ceilings wrought in fretwork, and delicately gilded and painted with azure, vermilion, and other brilliant colors, or minutely inlaid with cedar and other precious woods, specimens of which have survived in all their luster the lapse of several centuries.

Many of the houses had fountains, which threw up jets of water to refresh and cool the air. They had lofty towers also, of wood or stone, curiously carved and ornamented, and covered with plates of metal that glittered in the sun. Such was the refined and delicate taste in architecture that prevailed among this elegant people; insomuch, that to use the beautiful simile of an Arabian writer, "Granada, in the days of Jusef, was as a silver vase filled with emeralds and jacinths."

One anecdote will be sufficient to show the magnanimity of this generous prince. The long truce which had succeeded the battle of Salado was at an end, and every effort of Jusef to renew it was in vain. His deadly foe, Alfonso XI. of Castile, took the field with great force, and laid siege to Gibraltar. Jusef reluctantly took up arms, and sent troops to the relief of the place; when, in the midst of his anxiety, he received tidings that his dreaded foe had suddenly fallen a victim to the plague. Instead of manifesting exultation on the occasion, Jusef called to mind the great qualities of the deceased, and was touched with a noble sorrow. "Alas!" cried he, "the world has lost one of its most excellent princes—a sovereign who knew how to honor merit, whether in friend or foe!"

The Spanish chroniclers themselves bear witness to this magnanimity. According to their accounts, the Moorish cavaliers partook of the sentiment of their king, and put on mourning for the death of Alfonso. Even those of Gibraltar, who had been so closely invested, when they knew that the hostile monarch lay dead in his camp, determined among themselves that no hostile movement should be made against the Christians.

The day on which the camp was broken up and the army departed, bearing the corpse of Alfonso, the Moors issued in multitudes from Gibraltar, and stood mute and melancholy, watching the mournful pageant. The same reverence for the deceased was observed by all the Moorish commanders on the frontiers, who suffered the funeral train to pass in safety, bearing the corpse of the Christian sovereign from Gibraltar to Seville.*

Jusef did not long survive the enemy he had so generously deplored. In the year 1354, as he was one day praying in the royal mosque of the Alhambra, a maniac rushed suddenly from behind and plunged a dagger in his side. The cries of the king brought his guards and courtiers to his assistance. They found him weltering in his blood, and in convulsions. He was borne to the royal apartments, but expired almost immediately. The murderer was cut to pieces and his limbs burned in public, to gratify the fury of the populace.

The body of the king was interred in a superb sepulcher of white marble; a long epitaph in letters of gold upon an azure ground recorded his virtues. "Here lies a king and martyr of an illustrious line, gentle, learned and virtuous; renowned for the graces of his person and his manners; whose clemency, piety and benevolence were extolled throughout the kingdom of Granada. He was a great prince, an illustrious captain; a sharp sword of the Moslems; a valiant standard-bearer among the most potent monarchs," etc.

The mosque still remains, which once resounded with

* "Y los Moros que estaban en la villa y Castillo de Gibraltar despues que sopieron que el Rey Don Alonzo era muerto, ordenaron entresi que ninguno non fuesse osado de fazer ningun movimiento contra los Christianos, nin mover pelear contra ellos, estovieron todos quedos y dezian entre ellos que aquel dia muriera un noble rey y gran principe del mundo!"

the dying cries of Jusef, but the monument which recorded his virtues has long since disappeared. His name, however, remains inscribed among the ornaments of the Alhambra, and will be perpetuated in connection with this renowned pile, which it was his pride and delight to beautify.

THE LEGENDS OF THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

THE LEGEND OF DON RODERICK.*

CHAPTER I.

THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF SPAIN—OF THE MISRULE OF WITIZA THE WICKED.

SPAIN, or Iberia as it was called in ancient days, has been a land harassed from the earliest times by the invader. The Celts, the Greeks, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, by turns or simultaneously, infringed its territories, drove the native Iberians from their rightful homes, and established colonies and founded cities in the land. It subsequently fell into the all-grasping power of Rome, remaining for some time a subjugated province; and when that gigantic empire crumbled into pieces, the Suevi, the Alani, and the Vandals, those barbarians of the North, overran and ravaged this devoted country, and portioned out the soil among them.

Their sway was not of long duration. In the fifth century the Goths, who were then the allies of Rome, undertook the reconquest of Iberia, and succeeded, after a desperate struggle of three years' duration. They

* Many of the facts in this legend are taken from an old chronicle, written in quaint and antiquated Spanish, and professing to be a translation from the Arabian chronicle of the Moor Rasis, by Mohammed, a Moslem writer, and Gil Perez, a Spanish priest. It is supposed to be a piece of literary mosaic work, made up from both Spanish and Arabian chronicles; yet from this work most of the Spanish historians have drawn their particulars relative to the fortunes of Don Roderick.

drove before them the barbarous hordes, their predecessors, intermarried and incorporated themselves with the original inhabitants, and founded a powerful and splendid empire, comprising the Iberian Peninsula, the ancient Narbonnaise, afterward called Gallia Gotica, or Gothic Gaul, and a part of the African coast called Tingitania. A new nation was, in a manner, produced by this mixture of the Goths and Iberians. Sprung from a union of warrior races, reared and nurtured amid the din of arms, the Gothic Spaniards, if they may be so termed, were a warlike, unquiet, yet high minded and heroic people. Their simple and abstemious habits, their contempt for toil and suffering, and their love of daring enterprise fitted them for a soldier's life. So addicted were they to war that, when they had no external foes to contend with, they fought with one another; and, when engaged in battle, says an old chronicler, the very thunders and lightnings of heaven could not separate them.*

For two centuries and a half the Gothic power remained unshaken, and the scepter was wielded by twenty-five successive kings. The crown was elective, in a council of palatines, composed of the bishops and nobles, who, while they swore allegiance to the newly made sovereign, bound him by a reciprocal oath to be faithful to his trust. Their choice was made from among the people, subject only to one condition, that the king should be of pure Gothic blood. But though the crown was elective in principle, it gradually became hereditary from usage, and the power of the sovereign grew to be almost absolute. The king was commander-in-chief of the armies; the whole patronage of the kingdom was in his hands; he summoned and dissolved the national councils; he made and revoked laws according to his pleasure; and, having ecclesiastical supremacy, he exercised a sway even over the consciences of his subjects.

The Goths, at the time of their inroad, were stout adherents to the Arian doctrines; but after a time they embraced the Catholic faith, which was maintained by the native Spaniards free from many of the gross super-

* Florian de Ocampo, lib. 3, c. 12. Justin, Abrev. Trog. Pomp. L. 44. Bleda, Cronica, L. 2, c. 3.

stitutions of the church at Rome, and this unity of faith contributed more than anything else to blend and harmonize the two races into one. The bishops and other clergy were exemplary in their lives, and aided to promote the influence of the laws and maintain the authority of the state. The fruits of regular and secure government were manifest in the advancement of agriculture, commerce, and the peaceful arts; and in the increase of wealth, of luxury, and refinement; but there was a gradual decline of the simple, hardy, and warlike habits that had distinguished the nation in its semi-barbarous days.

Such was the state of Spain when, in the year of Redemption 701, Witiza was elected to the Gothic throne. The beginning of his reign gave promise of happy days to Spain. He redressed grievances, moderated the tributes of his subjects, and conducted himself with mingled mildness and energy in the administration of the laws. In a little while, however, he threw off the mask, and showed himself in his true nature, cruel and luxurious.

Two of his relatives, sons of a preceding king, awakened his jealousy for the security of his throne. One of them, named Favila, Duke of Cantabria, he put to death, and would have inflicted the same fate upon his son Pelayo, but that the youth was beyond his reach, being preserved by Providence for the future salvation of Spain. The other object of his suspicion was Theodofredo, who lived retired from court. The violence of Witiza reached him even in his retirement. His eyes were put out, and he was immured within a castle at Cordova. Roderick, the youthful son of Theodofredo, escaped to Italy, where he received protection from the Romans.

Witiza, now considering himself secure upon the throne, gave the reins to his licentious passions, and soon, by his tyranny and sensuality, acquired the appellation of Witiza the Wicked. Despising the old Gothic continence, and yielding to the example of the sect of Mohammed, which suited his lascivious temperament, he indulged in a plurality of wives and concubines, encouraging his subjects to do the same. Nay, he even sought to gain the sanction of the church to his excesses, promulgating a law by which the clergy were released

from their vows of celibacy, and permitted to marry and to entertain paramours.

The sovereign Pontiff Constantine threatened to depose and excommunicate him, unless he abrogated this licentious law; but Witiza set him at defiance, threatening, like his Gothic predecessor Alaric, to assail the eternal city with his troops, and make spoil of her accumulated treasures.* “We will adorn our damsels,” said he, “with the jewels of Rome, and replenish our coffers from the mint of St. Peter.”

Some of the clergy opposed themselves to the innovating spirit of the monarch, and endeavored from the pulpits to rally the people to the pure doctrines of their faith; but they were deposed from their sacred office, and banished as seditious mischief-makers. The church of Toledo continued refractory; the Archbishop Sindaredo, it is true, was disposed to accommodate himself to the corruptions of the times, but the prebendaries battled intrepidly against the new laws of the monarch, and stood manfully in defense of their vows of chastity. “Since the church of Toledo will not yield itself to our will,” said Witiza, “it shall have two husbands.” So saying, he appointed his own brother Oppas, at that time Archbishop of Seville, to take a seat with Sindaredo in the episcopal chair of Toledo, and made him primate of Spain. He was a priest after his own heart, and seconded him in all profligate abuses.

It was in vain the denunciations of the church were fulminated from the chair of St. Peter; Witiza threw off all allegiance to the Roman pontiff, threatening with pain of death those who should obey the papal mandates. “We will suffer no foreign ecclesiastic, with triple crown,” said he, “to domineer over our dominions.”

The Jews had been banished from the country during the preceding reign, but Witiza permitted them to return, and even bestowed upon their synagogues privileges of which he had despoiled the churches. The children of Israel, when scattered throughout the earth by the fall of Jerusalem, had carried with them into other lands the gainful arcana of traffic, and were especially noted as

* Chron. de Luitprando, 709. Abarca, Anales de Aragon (el Mahometismo, Fol. 5).

opulent money-changers and curious dealers in gold and silver and precious stones; on this occasion, therefore, they were enabled, it is said, to repay the monarch for his protection by bags of money and caskets of sparkling gems, the rich product of their Oriental commerce.

The kingdom at this time enjoyed external peace, but there were symptoms of internal discontent. Witiza took the alarm; he remembered the ancient turbulence of the nation, and its proneness to internal feuds. Issuing secret orders, therefore, in all directions, he dismantled most of the cities, and demolished the castles and fortresses that might serve as rallying points for the factious. He disarmed the people also, and converted the weapons of war into the implements of peace. It seemed, in fact, as if the millennium were dawning upon the land, for the sword was beaten into a plowshare, and the spear into a pruning-hook.

While thus the ancient martial fire of the nation was extinguished, its morals likewise were corrupted. The altars were abandoned, the churches closed, wide disorder and sensuality prevailed throughout the land, so that, according to the old chroniclers, within the compass of a few short years, "Witiza the Wicked taught all Spain to sin."

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE OF DON RODERICK—HIS GOVERNMENT.

WOE to the ruler who founds his hope of sway on the weakness or corruption of the people. The very measures taken by Witiza to perpetuate his power insured his downfall. While the whole nation, under his licentious rule, was sinking into vice and effeminacy, and the arm of war was unstrung, the youthful Roderick, son of Theodofredo, was training up for action in the stern but wholesome school of adversity. He instructed himself in the use of arms; became adroit and vigorous by varied exercises; learned to despise all danger, and inured himself to hunger and watchfulness and the rigor of the seasons.

His merits and misfortunes procured him many friends

among the Romans; and when, being arrived at a fitting age, he undertook to revenge the wrongs of his father and his kindred, a host of brave and hardy soldiers flocked to his standard. With these he made his sudden appearance in Spain. The friends of his house and the disaffected of all classes hastened to join him, and he advanced rapidly and without opposition through an unarmed and enervated land.

Witiza saw too late the evil he had brought upon himself. He made a hasty levy, and took the field with a scantily equipped and undisciplined host, but was easily routed and made prisoner, and the whole kingdom submitted to Don Roderick.

The ancient city of Toledo, the royal residence of the Gothic kings, was the scene of high festivity and solemn ceremonial on the coronation of the victor. Whether he was elected to the throne according to the Gothic usage, or seized it by the right of conquest, is a matter of dispute among historians, but all agree that the nation submitted cheerfully to his sway, and looked forward to prosperity and happiness under their newly elevated monarch. His appearance and character seemed to justify the anticipation. He was in the splendor of youth, and of a majestic presence. His soul was bold and daring, and elevated by lofty desires. He had a sagacity that penetrated the thoughts of men, and a magnificent spirit that won all hearts. Such is the picture which ancient writers give of Don Roderick, when, with all the stern and simple virtues unimpaired, which he had acquired in adversity and exile, and flushed with the triumph of a pious revenge, he ascended the Gothic throne.

Prosperity, however, is the real touchstone of the human heart; no sooner did Roderick find himself in possession of the crown than the love of power and the jealousy of rule were awakened in his breast. His first measure was against Witiza, who was brought in chains into his presence. Roderick beheld the captive monarch with an unpitiful eye, remembering only his wrongs and cruelties to his father. "Let the evils he has inflicted on others be visited upon his own head," said he; "as he did unto Theodofredo, even so be it done unto him." So the eyes of Witiza were put out, and he was thrown

into the same dungeon at Cordova in which Theodofredo had languished. There he passed the brief remnant of his days in perpetual darkness, a prey to wretchedness and remorse.

Roderick now cast an uneasy and suspicious eye upon Evan and Siseburto, the two sons of Witiza. Fearful lest they should foment some secret rebellion, he banished them the kingdom. They took refuge in the Spanish dominions in Africa, where they were received and harbored by Requila, governor of Tangier, out of gratitude for favors which he had received from their late father. There they remained, to brood over their fallen fortunes, and to aid in working out the future woes of Spain.

Their uncle Oppas, bishop of Seville, who had been made co-partner by Witiza in the archiepiscopal chair at Toledo, would have likewise fallen under the suspicion of the king; but he was a man of consummate art, and vast exterior sanctity, and won upon the good graces of the monarch. He was suffered, therefore, to retain his sacred office at Seville; but the see of Toledo was given in charge to the venerable Urbino; and the law of Witiza was revoked that dispensed the clergy from their vows of celibacy.

The jealousy of Roderick for the security of his crown was soon again aroused, and his measures were prompt and severe. Having been informed that the governors of certain castles and fortresses in Castile and Andalusia had conspired against him, he caused them to be put to death and their strongholds to be demolished. He now went on to imitate the pernicious policy of his predecessor, throwing down walls and towers, disarming the people, and thus incapacitating them from rebellion. A few cities were permitted to retain their fortifications, but these were intrusted to alcajdes in whom he had especial confidence; the greater part of the kingdom was left defenseless; the nobles, who had been roused to temporary manhood during the recent stir of war, sank back into the inglorious state of inaction which had disgraced them during the reign of Witiza, passing their time in feasting and dancing to the sound of loose and wanton minstrelsy.* It was scarcely possible to recog-

* Mariana, Hist. Esp. L. 6, c. 21.

nize in these idle wassailers and soft voluptuaries the descendants of the stern and frugal warriors of the frozen North, who had braved flood and mountain, and heat and cold, and had battled their way to empire across half a world in arms.

They surrounded their youthful monarch, it is true, with a blaze of military pomp. Nothing could surpass the splendor of their arms, which were embossed and enameled, and enriched with gold and jewels and curious devices; nothing could be more gallant and glorious than their array; it was all plume and banner and silken pageantry, the gorgeous trappings for tilt and tourney and courtly revel; but the iron soul of war was wanting.

How rare it is to learn wisdom from the misfortunes of others! With the fate of Witiza full before his eyes, Don Roderick indulged in the same pernicious errors, and was doomed, in like manner, to prepare the way for his own perdition.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE LOVES OF RODERICK AND THE PRINCESS ELYATA.

As yet the heart of Roderick, occupied by the struggles of his early life, by warlike enterprises, and by the inquietudes of newly gotten power, had been insensible to the charms of women; but in the present voluptuous calm, the amorous propensities of his nature assumed their sway. There are divers accounts of the youthful beauty who first found favor in his eyes, and was elevated by him to the throne. We follow in our legend the details of an Arabian chronicler,* authenticated by a Spanish poet.† Let those who dispute our facts produce better authority for their contradiction.

Among the few fortified places that had not been dismantled by Don Roderick was the ancient city of Denia, situated on the Mediterranean coast, and defended on a rock-built castle that overlooked the sea.

The alcaide of the castle, with many of the people of

* *Perdida de España*, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. 1.

† *Lope de Vega*.

Denia, was one day on his knees in the chapel, imploring the Virgin to allay a tempest which was strewing the coast with wrecks, when a sentinel brought word that a Moorish cruiser was standing for the land. The alcajde gave orders to ring the alarm bells, light signal fires on the hill-tops, and rouse the country, for the coast was subject to cruel maraudings from the Barbary cruisers.

In a little while the horsemen of the neighborhood were seen pricking along the beach, armed with such weapons as they could find, and the alcajde and his scanty garrison descended from the hill. In the meantime the Moorish bark came rolling and pitching toward the land. As it drew near the rich carving and gilding with which it was decorated, its silken bandaroles and banks of crimson oars, showed it to be no warlike vessel, but a sumptuous galiot destined for state and ceremony. It bore the marks of the tempest; the masts were broken, the oars shattered, and fragments of snowy sails and silken awnings were fluttering in the blast.

As the galiot grounded upon the sand, the impatient rabble rushed into the surf to capture and make spoil; but were awed into admiration and respect by the appearance of the illustrious company on board. There were Moors of both sexes, sumptuously arrayed and adorned with precious jewels, bearing the demeanor of persons of lofty rank. Among them shone conspicuous a youthful beauty, magnificently attired, to whom all seemed to pay reverence.

Several of the Moors surrounded her with drawn swords, threatening death to any that approached; others sprang from the bark, and throwing themselves on their knees before the alcajde, implored him, by his honor and courtesy as a knight, to protect a royal virgin from injury and insult.

"You behold before you," said they, "the only daughter of the King of Algiers, the betrothed bride of the son of the King of Tunis. We were conducting her to the court of her expecting bridegroom, when a tempest drove us from our course, and compelled us to take refuge on your coast. Be not more cruel than the tempest, but deal nobly with that which even sea and storm have spared."

The alcajde listened to their prayers. He conducted

the princess and her train to the castle, where every honor due to her rank was paid her. Some of her ancient attendants interceded for her liberation, promising countless sums to be paid by her father for her ransom; but the alcaide turned a deaf ear to all their golden offers. "She is a royal captive," said he; "it belongs to my sovereign alone to dispose of her." After she had reposed, therefore, for some days at the castle, and recovered from the fatigue and terror of the seas, he caused her to be conducted, with all her train, in magnificent state to the court of Don Roderick.

The beautiful Elyata* entered Toledo more like a triumphant sovereign than a captive. A chosen band of Christian horsemen, splendidly armed, appeared to wait upon her as a mere guard of honor. She was surrounded by the Moorish damsels of her train and followed by her own Moslem guards, all attired with the magnificence that had been intended to grace her arrival at the court of Tunis. The princess was arrayed in bridal robes, woven in the most costly looms of the Orient; her diadem sparkled with diamonds and was decorated with the rarest plumes of the bird of paradise, and even the silken trappings of her palfrey, which swept the ground, were covered with pearls and precious stones. As this brilliant cavalcade crossed the bridge of the Tagus all Toledo poured forth to behold it, and nothing was heard throughout the city but praises of the wonderful beauty of the Princess of Algiers. King Roderick came forth, attended by the chivalry of his court, to receive the royal captive. His recent voluptuous life had disposed him for tender and amorous affections, and at the first sight of the beautiful Elyata he was enraptured with her charms. Seeing her face clouded with sorrow and anxiety, he soothed her with gentle and courteous words, and conducting her to a royal palace, "Behold," said he, "thy habitation, where no one shall molest thee; consider thyself at home in the mansion of thy father, and dispose of anything according to thy will."

Here the princess passed her time, with the female attendants who had accompanied her from Algiers; and no one but the king was permitted to visit her, who

* By some she is called Zara.

daily became more and more enamored of his lovely captive, and sought by tender assiduity to gain her affections. The distress of the princess at her captivity was soothed by this gentle treatment. She was of an age when sorrow cannot long hold sway over the heart. Accompanied by her youthful attendants, she ranged the spacious apartments of the palace, and sported among the groves and alleys of its garden. Every day the remembrance of the paternal home grew less and less painful, and the king became more and more amiable in her eyes; and when, at length, he offered to share his heart and throne with her, she listened with downcast looks and kindling blushes, but with an air of resignation.

One obstacle remained to the complete fruition of the monarch's wishes, and this was the religion of the princess. Roderick forthwith employed the archbishop of Toledo to instruct the beautiful Elyata in the mysteries of the Christian faith. The female intellect is quick in perceiving the merits of new doctrines; the archbishop, therefore, soon succeeded in converting, not merely the princess, but most of her attendants, and a day was appointed for their public baptism. The ceremony was performed with great pomp and solemnity, in the presence of all the nobility and chivalry of the court. The princess and her damsels, clad in white, walked on foot to the cathedral, while numerous beautiful children, arrayed as angels, strewed their path with flowers; and the archbishop meeting them at the portal received them, as it were, into the bosom of the church. The princess abandoned her Moorish appellation of Elyata, and was baptized by the name of Exilona, by which she was thenceforth called, and has been generally been known in history.

The nuptials of Roderick and the beautiful convert took place shortly afterward, and were celebrated with great magnificence. There were jousts, and tourneys, and banquets, and other rejoicings, which lasted twenty days, and were attended by the principal nobles from all parts of Spain. After these were over, such of the attendants of the princess as refused to embrace Christianity and desired to return to Africa were dismissed with munificent presents; and an embassy was sent to the King of Algiers, to inform him of the nuptials of his

daughter, and to proffer him the friendship of King Roderick.*

CHAPTER IV.

OF COUNT JULIAN.

FOR a time Don Roderick lived happily with his young and beautiful queen, and Toledo was the seat of festivity and splendor. The principal nobles throughout the kingdom repaired to his court to pay him homage, and to receive his commands; and none were more devoted in their reverence than those who were obnoxious to suspicion from their connection with the late king.

Among the foremost of these was Count Julian, a man destined to be infamously renowned in the dark story of his country's woes. He was of one of the proudest Gothic families, Lord of Consuegra and Algeziras, and connected by marriage with Witiza and the Bishop Oppas, his wife, the Countess Frandina, being their sister. In consequence of this connection and of his own merits, he had enjoyed the highest dignities and commands, being one of the *Espatorios*, or royal sword-bearers; an office of the greatest confidence about the person of the sovereign.† He had, moreover, been intrusted with the military government of the Spanish possessions on the African coast of the strait, which at that time were threatened by the Arabs of the East, the followers of Mohammed, who were advancing their victorious standard to the extremity of Western Africa.

* “Como esta Infanta era muy hermosa, y el Rey [Don Rodrigo] dispuesta y gentil hombre, entro por medio el amor y aficion, y junto con el regalo con que la avia mandado hospedar y servir ful causa que el rey persuadio esta Infanta, que si se tornava a su ley de christiano la tomaria por muger, y que la haria señora de sus Reynos. Con esta persuasion ella feu contenta, y aviendose vuelto christiana, se caso con ella, y se celebraron sus bodas con muchas fiestas y regozijos, como era razon.”—Abulcasim, *Conq'st de Espan.* cap. 3.

† *Condes Espatorios*; so called from the drawn swords of ample size and breadth with which they kept guard in the antechambers of the Gothic kings. Comes *Spathariorum*, *custodum corporis Regis Profectus*. Hunc et *Propospatharium appellatum existimo*.—*Patr. Pant. de Offic. Goth.*

Count Julian established his seat of government at Ceuta, the frontier bulwark and one of the far-famed gates of the Mediterranean Sea. Here he boldly faced, and held in check, the torrent of Moslem invasion.

Don Julian was a man of an active, but irregular genius, and a grasping ambition; he had a love for power and grandeur, in which he was joined by his haughty countess; and they could ill brook the downfall of their house as threatened by the fate of Witiza. They had hastened, therefore, to pay their court to the newly elevated monarch, and to assure him of their fidelity to his interests.

Roderick was readily persuaded of the sincerity of Count Julian; he was aware of his merits as a soldier and a governor, and continued him in his important command: honoring him with many other marks of implicit confidence. Count Julian sought to confirm this confidence by every proof of devotion. It was a custom among the Goths to rear many of the children of the most illustrious families in the royal household. They served as pages to the king, and handmaids and ladies of honor to the queen, and were instructed in all manner of accomplishments befitting their gentle blood. When about to depart for Ceuta, to resume his command, Don Julian brought his daughter Florinda to present her to the sovereigns. She was a beautiful virgin that had not as yet attained to womanhood. "I confide her to your protection," said he to the king, "to be unto her as a father; and to have her trained in the paths of virtue. I can leave with you no dearer pledge of my loyalty."

King Roderick received the timid and blushing maiden into his paternal care, promising to watch over her happiness with a parent's eye, and that she should be enrolled among the most cherished attendants of the queen. With this assurance of the welfare of his child, Count Julian departed, well pleased, for his government at Ceuta.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF FLORINDA.

THE beautiful daughter of Count Julian was received with great favor by the Queen Exilona and admitted among the noble damsels that attended upon her person. Here she lived in honor and apparent security, and surrounded by innocent delights. To gratify his queen, Don Roderick had built for her rural recreation a palace without the walls of Toledo, on the banks of the Tagus. It stood in the midst of a garden, adorned after the luxurious style of the East. The air was perfumed by fragrant shrubs and flowers; the groves resounded with the song of the nightingale, while the gush of fountains and waterfalls, and the distant murmur of the Tagus, made it a delightful retreat during the sultry days of summer. The charm of perfect privacy also reigned throughout the place, for the garden walls were high, and numerous guards kept watch without to protect it from all intrusion.

In this delicious abode, more befitting an Oriental voluptuary than a Gothic king, Don Roderick was accustomed to while away much of that time which should have been devoted to the toilsome cares of government. The very security and peace which he had produced throughout his dominions by his precautions to abolish the means and habitudes of war, had effected a disastrous change in his character. The hardy and heroic qualities which had conducted him to the throne were softened in the lap of indulgence. Surrounded by the pleasures of an idle and effeminate court, and beguiled by the example of his degenerate nobles, he gave way to a fatal sensuality that had lain dormant in his nature during the virtuous days of his adversity. The mere love of female beauty had first enamored him of Exilona, and the same passion, fostered by voluptuous idleness, now betrayed him into the commission of an act fatal to himself and Spain. The following is the story of his error as gathered from an old chronicle and legend.

In a remote part of the palace was an apartment devoted to the queen. It was like an Eastern harem, shut up from the foot of man, and where the king himself

but rarely entered. It had its own courts, and gardens, and fountains, where the queen was wont to recreate herself with her damsels, as she had been accustomed to do in the jealous privacy of her father's palace.

One sultry day the king, instead of taking his siesta, or midday slumber, repaired to this apartment to seek the society of the queen. In passing through a small oratory he was drawn by the sound of female voices to a casement overhung with myrtles and jessamines. It looked into an interior garden or court, set out with orange-trees, in the midst of which was a marble fountain, surrounded by a grassy bank, enameled with flowers.

It was the high noontide of a summer day, when, in sultry Spain, the landscape trembles to the eye, and all nature seeks repose, except the grasshopper, that pipes his lulling note to the herdsman as he sleeps beneath the shade.

Around the fountain were several of the damsels of the queen, who, confident of the sacred privacy of the place, were yielding in that cool retreat to the indulgence prompted by the season and the hour. Some lay asleep on the flowery bank; others sat on the margin of the fountain, talking and laughing, as they bathed their feet in its limpid waters, and King Roderick beheld delicate limbs shining through the wave, that might rival the marble in whiteness.

Among the damsels was one who had come from the Barbary coast with the queen. Her complexion had the dark tinge of Mauritania, but it was clear and transparent, and the deep rich rose blushed through the lovely brown. Her eyes were black and full of fire, and flashed from under long silken eyelashes.

A sportive contest arose among the maidens as to the comparative beauty of the Spanish and Moorish forms, but the Mauritanian damsel revealed limbs of voluptuous symmetry that seemed to defy all rivalry.

The Spanish beauties were on the point of giving up the contest, when they bethought themselves of the young Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, who lay on the grassy bank, abandoned to a summer slumber. The soft glow of youth and health mantled on her cheek; her fringed eyelashes scarcely covered their sleeping

orbs; her moist and ruby lips were slightly parted, just revealing a gleam of her ivory teeth, while her innocent bosom rose and fell beneath her bodice, like the gentle swelling and sinking of a tranquil sea. There was a breathing tenderness and beauty in the sleeping virgin that seemed to send forth sweetness like the flowers around her.

“Behold,” cried her companions exultingly, “the champion of Spanish beauty!”

In their playful eagerness they half disrobed the innocent Florinda before she was aware. She awoke in time, however, to escape from their busy hands; but enough of her charms had been revealed to convince the monarch that they were not to be rivaled by the rarest beauties of Mauritania.

From this day the heart of Roderick was inflamed with a fatal passion. He gazed on the beautiful Florinda with fervid desire, and sought to read in her looks whether there was levity or wantonness in her bosom; but the eye of the damsel ever sank beneath his gaze, and remained bent on the earth in virgin modesty.

It was in vain he called to mind the sacred trust reposed in him by Count Julian, and the promise he had given to watch over his daughter with paternal care; his heart was vitiated by sensual indulgence, and the consciousness of power had rendered him selfish in his gratifications.

Being one evening in the garden where the queen was diverting herself with her damsels, and coming to the fountain where he had beheld the innocent maidens at their sport, he could no longer restrain the passion that raged within his breast. Seating himself beside the fountain, he called Florinda to him to draw forth a thorn which had pierced his hand. The maiden knelt at his feet, to examine his hand, and the touch of her slender fingers thrilled through his veins. As she knelt, too, her amber locks fell in rich ringlets about her beautiful head, her innocent bosom palpitated beneath the crimson bodice, and her timid blushes increased the effulgence of her charms.

Having examined the monarch’s hand in vain, she looked up in his face with artless perplexity.

“Señor,” said she, “I can find no thorn, nor any sign of wound.”

Don Roderick grasped her hand and pressed it to his heart. "It is here, lovely Florinda!" said he. "It is here! and thou alone canst pluck it forth!"

"My lord!" exclaimed the blushing and astonished maiden.

"Florinda!" said Don Roderick, "dost thou love me?"

"Señor," said she, "my father taught me to love and reverence you. He confided me to your care as one who would be as a parent to me, when he should be far distant, serving your majesty with life and loyalty. May God incline your majesty ever to protect me as a father." So saying, the maiden dropped her eyes to the ground, and continued kneeling: but her countenance had become deadly pale, and as she knelt she trembled.

"Florinda," said the king, "either thou dost not, or thou wilt not understand me. I would have thee love me, not as a father, nor as a monarch, but as one who adores thee. Why dost thou start? No one shall know our loves; and, moreover the love of a monarch inflicts no degradation like the love of a common man—riches and honors attend upon it. I will advance thee to rank and dignity, and place thee above the proudest females of my court. Thy father, too, shall be more exalted and endowed than any noble in my realm."

The soft eye of Florinda kindled at these words. "Señor," said she, "the line I spring from can receive no dignity by means so vile; and my father would rather die than purchase rank and power by the dishonor of his child. But I see," continued she, "that your majesty speaks in this manner only to try me. You may have thought me light and simple, and unworthy to attend upon the queen. I pray your majesty to pardon me, that I have taken your pleasantry in such serious part."

In this way the agitated maiden sought to evade the addresses of the monarch, but still her cheek was blanched, and her lip quivered as she spoke.

The king pressed her hand to his lips with fervor. "May ruin seize me," cried he, "if I speak to prove thee. My heart, my kingdom, are at thy command. Only be mine, and thou shalt rule absolute mistress of myself and my domains."

The damsel rose from the earth where she had hitherto knelt, and her whole countenance glowed with virtuous

indignation. "My lord," said she, "I am your subject, and in your power; take my life if it be your pleasure, but nothing shall tempt me to commit a crime which would be treason to the queen, disgrace to my father, agony to my mother, and perdition to myself." With these words she left the garden, and the king, for the moment, was too much awed by her indignant virtue to oppose her departure.

We shall pass briefly over the succeeding events of the story of Florinda, about which so much has been said and sung by chronicler and bard: for the sober page of history should be carefully chastened from all scenes that might inflame a wanton imagination—leaving them to poems and romances, and such like highly seasoned works of fantasy and recreation.

Let it suffice to say that Don Roderick pursued his suit to the beautiful Florinda, his passion being more and more inflamed by the resistance of the virtuous damsel. At length, forgetting what was due to helpless beauty, to his own honor as a knight, and his word as a sovereign, he triumphed over her weakness by base and unmanly violence.

There are not wanting those who affirm that the hapless Florinda lent a yielding ear to the solicitations of the monarch, and her name has been treated with opprobrium in several of the ancient chronicles and legendary ballads that have transmitted, from generation to generation, the story of the woes of Spain. In very truth, however, she appears to have been a guiltless victim, resisting, as far as helpless female could resist, the arts and intrigues of a powerful monarch, who had naught to check the indulgence of his will, and bemoaning her disgrace with a poignancy that shows how dearly she had prized her honor.

In the first paroxysm of her grief she wrote a letter to her father, blotted with her tears and almost incoherent from her agitation. "Would to God, my father," said she, "that the earth had opened and swallowed me ere I had been reduced to write these lines. I blush to tell thee what it is not proper to conceal. Alas, my father! thou hast intrusted thy lamb to the guardianship of the lion. Thy daughter has been dishonored, the royal cradle of the Goths polluted, and our lineage insulted

and disgraced. Hasten, my father, to rescue your child from the power of the spoiler, and to vindicate the honor of your house."

When Florinda had written these lines she summoned a youthful esquire, who had been a page in the service of her father. "Saddle thy steed," said she, "and if thou dost aspire to knightly honor, or hope for lady's grace; if thou hast fealty for thy lord, or devotion to his daughter, speed swiftly upon my errand. Rest not, halt not, spare not the spur, but hie thee day and night until thou reach the sea; take the first bark, and haste with sail and oar to Ceuta, nor pause until thou give this letter to the count my father." The youth put the letter in his bosom. "Trust me, lady," said he, "I will neither halt, nor turn aside, nor cast a look behind, until I reach Count Julian." He mounted his fleet steed, sped his way across the bridge, and soon left behind him the verdant valley of the Tagus.

CHAPTER VI.

DON RODERICK RECEIVES AN EXTRAORDINARY EMBASSY.

THE heart of Don Roderick was not so depraved by sensuality but that the wrong he had been guilty of toward the innocent Florinda, and the disgrace he had inflicted on her house, weighed heavy on his spirits, and a cloud began to gather on his once clear and unwrinkled brow.

Heaven, at this time, say the old Spanish chronicles, permitted a marvelous intimation of the wrath with which it intended to visit the monarch and his people, in punishment of their sins; nor are we, say the same orthodox writers, to startle and withhold our faith when we meet in the page of discreet and sober history with these signs and portents, which transcend the probabilities of ordinary life; for the revolutions of empires and the downfall of mighty kings are awful events, that shake the physical as well as the moral world, and are often announced by forerunning marvels and prodigious omens.

With such like cautious preliminaries do the wary but

credulous historiographers of yore usher in a marvelous event of prophecy and enchantment, linked in ancient story with the fortunes of Don Roderick, but which modern doubters would fain hold up as an apocryphal tradition of Arabian origin.

Now, so it happened, according to the legend, that about this time, as King Roderick was seated one day on his throne, surrounded by his nobles, in the ancient city of Toledo, two men of venerable appearance entered the hall of audience. Their snowy beards descended to their breasts, and their gray hairs were bound with ivy. They were arrayed in white garments of foreign or antiquated fashion, which swept the ground, and were cinctured with girdles, wrought with the signs of the zodiac, from which were suspended enormous bunches of keys of every variety of form. Having approached the throne and made obeisance: "Know, O king," said one of the old men, "that in days of yore, when Hercules of Libya, surnamed the Strong, had set up his pillars at the ocean strait, he erected a tower near to this ancient city of Toledo. He built it of prodigious strength, and finished it with magic art, shutting up within it a fearful secret, never to be penetrated without peril and disaster. To protect this terrible mystery he closed the entrance to the edifice with a ponderous door of iron, secured by a great lock of steel, and he left a command that every king who should succeed him should add another lock to the portal; denouncing woe and destruction on him who should eventually unfold the secret of the tower.

"The guardianship of the portal was given to our ancestors, and has continued in our family, from generation to generation, since the days of Hercules. Several kings from time to time have caused the gate to be thrown open, and have attempted to enter, but have paid dearly for their temerity. Some have perished within the threshold, others have been overwhelmed with horror at tremendous sounds, which shook the foundations of the earth, and have hastened to reclose the door and secure it with its thousand locks. Thus, since the days of Hercules, the inmost recesses of the pile have never been penetrated by mortal man, and a profound mystery continues to prevail over this great enchantment. This, O king, is all we have to relate; and our errand is to

entreat thee to repair to the tower and affix thy lock to the portal, as has been done by all thy predecessors." Having thus said, the ancient men made a profound reverence and departed from the presence chamber.*

Don Roderick remained for some time lost in thought after the departure of the men; he then dismissed all his court excepting the venerable Urbino, at that time archbishop of Toledo. The long white beard of this prelate bespoke his advanced age, and his overhanging eyebrows showed him a man full of wary counsel.

"Father," said the king, "I have an earnest desire to penetrate the mystery of this tower." The worthy prelate shook his hoary head. "Beware, my son," said he; "there are secrets hidden from man for his good. Your predecessors for many generations have respected this mystery, and have increased in might and empire. A knowledge of it, therefore, is not material to the welfare of your kingdom. Seek not then to indulge a rash and unprofitable curiosity, which is interdicted under such awful menaces."

"Of what importance," cried the king, "are the menaces of Hercules the Libyan? was he not a pagan, and can his enchantments have aught avail against a believer in our holy faith? Doubtless in this tower are locked up treasures of gold and jewels, amassed in days of old, the spoils of mighty kings, the riches of the pagan world. My coffers are exhausted; I have need of supply; and surely it would be an acceptable act in the eyes of Heaven to draw forth this wealth which lies buried under profane and necromantic spells, and consecrate it to religious purposes."

The venerable archbishop still continued to remonstrate, but Don Roderick heeded not his counsel, for he was led on by his malignant star. "Father," said he, "it is in vain you attempt to dissuade me. My resolution is fixed. To-morrow I will explore the hidden mystery, or rather the hidden treasures, of this tower."

* *Perdida de España*, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, l. 1, c. 6. *Cronica del Rey Don Rodrigo*, por el Moro Rasis, l. 1, c. 1. Bleda, *Cron.* cap. vii.

CHAPTER VII.

STORY OF THE MARVELOUS AND PORTENTOUS TOWER.

THE morning sun shone brightly upon the cliff-built towers of Toledo, when King Roderick issued out of the gate of the city at the head of a numerous train of courtiers and cavaliers, and crossed the bridge that bestrides the deep rocky bed of the Tagus. The shining cavalcade wound up the road that leads among the mountains, and soon came in sight of the necromantic tower.

Of this renowned edifice marvels are related by the ancient Arabian and Spanish chroniclers, "and I doubt much," adds the venerable Agapida, "whether many readers will not consider the whole as a cunningly devised fable, sprung from an Oriental imagination; but it is not for me to reject a fact which is recorded by all those writers who are the fathers of our national history; a fact, too, which is as well attested as most of the remarkable events in the story of Don Roderick. None but light and inconsiderate minds," continues the good friar, "do hastily reject the marvelous. To the thinking mind the whole world is enveloped in mystery, and everything is full of type and portent. To such a mind the necromantic tower of Toledo will appear as one of those wondrous monuments of the olden time; one of those Egyptian and Chaldaic piles, storied with hidden wisdom and mystic prophecy, which have been devised in past ages, when man yet enjoyed an intercourse with high and spiritual natures, and when human foresight partook of divination."

This singular tower was round and of great height and grandeur, erected upon a lofty rock, and surrounded by crags and precipices. The foundation was supported by four brazen lions, each taller than a cavalier on horseback. The walls were built of small pieces of jasper and various colored marbles, not larger than a man's hand; so subtly joined, however, that, but for their different hues, they might be taken for one entire stone. They were arranged with marvelous cunning so as to represent battles and warlike deeds of times and heroes long since passed away, and the whole surface was so admirably polished that the stones were as lustrous as glass, and

reflected the rays of the sun with such resplendent brightness as to dazzle all beholders.*

King Roderick and his courtiers arrived wondering and amazed at the foot of the rock. Here there was a narrow arched way cut through the living stone—the only entrance to the tower. It was closed by a massive iron gate covered with rusty locks of divers workmanship and in the fashion of different centuries, which had been affixed by the predecessors of Don Roderick. On either side of the portal stood the two ancient guardians of the tower, laden with the keys appertaining to the locks.

The king alighted and, approaching the portals, ordered the guardians to unlock the gate. The hoary-headed men drew back with terror. “Alas!” cried they, “what is it your majesty requires of us? Would you have the mischiefs of this tower unbound and let loose to shake the earth to its foundations?”

The venerable Archbishop Urbino likewise implored him not to disturb a mystery which had been held sacred from generation to generation within the memory of man, and which even Cæsar himself, when sovereign of Spain, had not ventured to invade. The youthful cavaliers, however, were eager to pursue the adventure, and encouraged him in his rash curiosity.

“Come what come may,” exclaimed Don Roderick, “I am resolved to penetrate the mystery of this tower.” So saying, he again commanded the guardians to unlock the portal. The ancient men obeyed with fear and trembling, but their hands shook with age, and when they applied the keys the locks were so rusted by time, or of such strange workmanship, that they resisted their feeble efforts, whereupon the young cavaliers pressed forward and lent their aid. Still, the locks were so numerous and difficult that with all their eagerness and strength a great part of the day was exhausted before the whole of them could be mastered.

When the last bolt had yielded to the key the guardians and the reverend archbishop again entreated the king to pause and reflect. “Whatever is within this

*From the minute account of the good friar, drawn from the ancient chronicles, it would appear that the walls of the tower were pictured in mosaic work.

tower," said they, "is as yet harmless and lies bound under a mighty spell: venture not then to open a door which may let forth a flood of evil upon the land." But the anger of the king was roused, and he ordered that the portal should be instantly thrown open. In vain, however, did one after another exert his strength, and equally in vain did the cavaliers unite their forces, and apply their shoulders to the gate; though there was neither bar nor bolt remaining, it was perfectly immovable.

The patience of the king was now exhausted, and he advanced to apply his hand; scarcely, however, did he touch the iron gate, when it swung slowly open, uttering, as it were, a dismal groan as it turned reluctantly upon its hinges. A cold damp wind issued forth, accompanied by a tempestuous sound. The hearts of the ancient guardians quaked within them, and their knees smote together; but several of the youthful cavaliers rushed in, eager to gratify their curiosity, or to signalize themselves in this redoubtable enterprise. They had scarcely advanced a few paces, however, when they recoiled, overcome by the baleful air or by some fearful vision.* Upon this, the king ordered that fires should be kindled to dispel the darkness and to correct the noxious and long imprisoned air; he then led the way into the interior; but though stout of heart, he advanced with awe and hesitation.

After proceeding a short distance he entered a hall, or antechamber, on the opposite of which was a door, and before it, on a pedestal, stood a gigantic figure, of the color of bronze, and of a terrible aspect. It held a huge mace, which it twirled incessantly, giving such cruel and resounding blows upon the earth as to prevent all further entrance.

The king paused at sight of this appalling figure, for whether it were a living being, or a statue of magic artifice, he could not tell. On its breast was a scroll whereon was inscribed in large letters, "I do my duty."† After a little while Roderick picked up heart, and addressed it with great solemnity: "Whatever thou be," said he, "know that I come not to violate this sanctuary, but to

* Bleda, Cronica, cap. 7.

† Idem.

inquire into the mystery it contains; I conjure thee, therefore, to let me pass in safety."

Upon this the figure paused with uplifted mace, and the king and his train passed unmolested through the door.

They now entered a vast chamber, of a rare and sumptuous architecture, difficult to be described. The walls were encrusted with the most precious gems, so joined together as to form one smooth and perfect surface. The lofty dome appeared to be self-supported, and was studded with gems, lustrous as the stars of the firmament. There was neither wood nor any other common or base material to be seen throughout the edifice. There were no windows or other openings to admit the day, yet a radiant light was spread throughout the place, which seemed to shine from the walls, and to render every object distinctly visible.

In the center of this hall stood a table of alabaster of the rarest workmanship, on which was inscribed in Greek characters, that Hercules Alcides, the Theban Greek, had founded this tower in the year of the world three thousand and six. Upon the table stood a golden casket, richly set round with precious stones, and closed with a lock of mother-of-pearl, and on the lid were inscribed the following words:

"In this coffer is contained the mystery of the tower. The hand of none but a king can open it; but let him beware! for marvelous events will be revealed to him, which are to take place before his death."

King Roderick boldly seized upon the casket. The venerable archbishop laid his hand upon his arm and made a last remonstrance. "Forbear, my son!" said he; "desist while there is yet time. Look not into the mysterious decrees of Providence. God has hidden them in mercy from our sight, and it is impious to rend the veil by which they are concealed."

"What have I to dread from a knowledge of the future?" replied Roderick, with an air of haughty presumption. "If good be destined me, I shall enjoy it by anticipation; if evil, I shall arm myself to meet it." So saying, he rashly broke the lock.

Within the coffer he found nothing but a linen cloth, folded between two tablets of copper. On unfolding it

he beheld painted on it figures of men on horseback, of fierce demeanor, clad in turbans and robes of various colors, after the fashion of the Arabs, with scimitars hanging from their necks and crossbows at their saddle-backs, and they carried banners and pennons with divers devices. Above them was inscribed in Greek characters, "Rash monarch! behold the men who are to hurl thee from thy throne and subdue thy kingdom!"

At sight of these things the king was troubled in spirit, and dismay fell upon his attendants. While they were yet regarding the paintings, it seemed as if the figures began to move, and a faint sound of warlike tumult arose from the cloth, with the clash of cymbal and bray of trumpet, the neigh of steed and shout of army; but all was heard indistinctly, as if afar off, or in a reverie or dream. The more they gazed, the plainer became the motion and the louder the noise, and the linen cloth rolled forth, and amplified, and spread out, as it were, a mighty banner, and filled the hall, and mingled with the air, until its texture was no longer visible, or appeared as a transparent cloud. And the shadowy figures appeared all in motion, and the din and uproar became fiercer and fiercer; and whether the whole were an animated picture, or a vision, or an array of embodied spirits, conjured up by supernatural power, no one present could tell. They beheld before them a great field of battle, where Christians and Moslems were engaged in deadly conflict. They heard the rush and tramp of steeds, the blast of trump and clarion, the clash of cymbal, and the stormy din of a thousand drums. There was the clash of swords, and maces, and battle-axes, with the whistling of arrows and the hurtling of darts and lances. The Christians quailed before the foe; the infidels pressed upon them and put them to utter rout; the standard of the cross was cast down, the banner of Spain was trodden under foot, the air resounded with shouts of triumph, with yells of fury, and with the groans of dying men. Amid the flying squadrons King Roderick beheld a crowned warrior, whose back was toward him, but whose armor and device were his own and who was mounted on a white steed that resembled his own warhorse Orelia. In the confusion of the flight the warrior was dismounted and was no longer

to be seen, and Orelia galloped wildly through the field of battle without a rider.

Roderick stayed to see no more, but rushed from the fatal hall, followed by his terrified attendants. They fled through the outer chamber, where the gigantic figure with the whirling mace had disappeared from his pedestal, and on issuing into the open air, they found the two ancient guardians of the tower lying dead at the portal, as though they had been crushed by some mighty blow. All nature, which had been clear and serene, was now in wild uproar. The heavens were darkened by heavy clouds; loud bursts of thunder rent the air, and the earth was deluged with rain and rattling hail.

The king ordered that the iron portal should be closed, but the door was immovable, and the cavaliers were dismayed by the tremendous turmoil and the mingled shouts and groans that continued to prevail within. The king and his train hastened back to Toledo, pursued and pelted by the tempest. The mountains shook and echoed with the thunder, trees were uprooted and blown down, and the Tagus raged and roared and flowed above its banks. It seemed to the affrighted courtiers as if the phantom legions of the tower had issued forth and mingled with the storm; for amid the claps of thunder and the howling of the wind they fancied they heard the sound of the drums and trumpets, the shouts of armies, and the rush of steeds. Thus beaten by tempest and overwhelmed with horror the king and his courtiers arrived at Toledo, clattering across the bridge of the Tagus, and entering the gate in headlong confusion as though they had been pursued by an enemy.

In the morning the heavens were again serene, and all nature was restored to tranquillity. The king, therefore, issued forth with his cavaliers, and took the road to the tower, followed by a great multitude, for he was anxious once more to close the iron door and shut up those evils that threatened to overwhelm the land. But lo! on coming in sight of the tower a new wonder met their eyes. An eagle appeared high in the air, seeming to descend from heaven. He bore in his beak a burning brand and, lighting on the summit of the tower, fanned the fire with his wings. In a little while the edifice burst forth into a blaze, as though it had been built of rosin, and the flames

mounted into the air with a brilliancy more dazzling than the sun; nor did they cease until every stone was consumed and the whole was reduced to a heap of ashes. Then there came a vast flight of birds, small of size and sable of hue, darkening the sky like a cloud; and they descended and wheeled in circles round the ashes, causing so great a wind with their wings that the whole was borne up into the air and scattered throughout all Spain, and wherever a particle of that ashes fell it was as a stain of blood. It is furthermore recorded by ancient men and writers of former days that all those on whom this dust fell were afterward slain in battle, when the country was conquered by the Arabs, and that the destruction of this necromantic tower was a sign and token of the approaching perdition of Spain.

“Let all those,” concludes the cautious friar, “who question the verity of this most marvelous occurrence consult those admirable sources of our history, the chronicle of the Moor Rasis, and the work entitled, *The Fall of Spain*, written by the Moor Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique. Let them consult, moreover, the venerable historian Bleda, and the cloud of other Catholic Spanish writers who have treated of this event, and they will find I have related nothing that has not been printed and published under the inspection and sanction of our holy mother church. God alone knoweth the truth of these things; I speak nothing but what has been handed down to me from times of old.”

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNT JULIAN—HIS FORTUNES IN AFRICA—HE HEARS OF THE DISHONOR OF HIS CHILD—HIS CONDUCT THEREUPON.

THE course of our legendary narration now returns to notice the fortunes of Count Julian, after his departure from Toledo, to resume his government on the coast of Barbary. He left the Countess Frandina at Algeziras, his paternal domain, for the province under his command was threatened with invasion. In fact, when he arrived at Ceuta, he found his post in imminent danger

from the all-conquering Moslems. The Arabs of the East, the followers of Mohammed, having subjugated several of the most potent Oriental kingdoms, had established their seat of empire at Damascus, where at this time it was filled by Waled Almanzor, surnamed "The Sword of God." From thence the tide of Moslem conquest had rolled on to the shores of the Atlantic, so that all Almagreb, or Western Africa, had submitted to the standard of the Prophet, with the exception of a portion of Tingitania, lying along the straits; being the province held by the Goths of Spain and commanded by Count Julian. The Arab invaders were a hundred thousand strong, most of them veteran troops, seasoned in warfare and accustomed to victory. They were led by an old Arab general, Muza ben Nosier, to whom was confided the government of Almagreb; most of which he had himself conquered. The ambition of this veteran was to make the Moslem conquest complete, by expelling the Christians from the African shores; with this view his troops menaced the few remaining Gothic fortresses of Tingitania, while he himself sat down in person before the walls of Ceuta. The Arab chieftain had been rendered confident by continual success, and thought nothing could resist his arms and the sacred standard of the Prophet. Impatient of the tedious delays of a siege, he led his troops boldly against the rock-built towers of Ceuta, and attempted to take the place by storm. The onset was fierce and the struggle desperate; the swarthy sons of the desert were light and vigorous and of fiery spirit, but the Goths, inured to danger on this frontier, retained the stubborn valor of their race, so impaired among their brethren in Spain. They were commanded, too, by one skilled in warfare and ambitious of renown. After a vehement conflict the Moslem assailants were repulsed from all points, and driven from the walls. Don Julian sallied forth and harassed them in their retreat, and so severe was the carnage that the veteran Muza was fain to break up his camp and retire confounded from the siege.

The victory at Ceuta resounded throughout Tingitania, and spread universal joy. On every side were heard shouts of exultation mingled with praises of Count Julian. He was hailed by the people, wherever he went,

as their deliverer, and blessings were invoked upon his head. The heart of Count Julian was lifted up, and his spirit swelled within him; but it was with noble and virtuous pride, for he was conscious of having merited the blessings of his country.

In the midst of his exultation, and while the rejoicings of the people were yet sounding in his ears, the page arrived who bore the letter from his unfortunate daughter.

“What tidings from the king?” said the count, as the page knelt before him. “None, my lord,” replied the youth; “but I bear a letter sent in all haste by the Lady Florinda.”

He took the letter from his bosom and presented it to his lord. As Count Julian read it his countenance darkened and fell. “This,” said he bitterly, “is my reward for serving a tyrant; and these are the honors heaped on me by my country while fighting its battles in a foreign land. May evil overtake me and infamy rest upon my name, if I cease until I have full measure of revenge.”

Count Julian was vehement in his passions, and took no counsel in his wrath. His spirit was haughty in the extreme, but destitute of true magnanimity, and when once wounded turned to gall and venom. A dark and malignant hatred entered into his soul, not only against Don Roderick, but against all Spain; he looked upon it as the scene of his disgrace, a land in which his family was dishonored, and, in seeking to avenge the wrongs he had suffered from his sovereign, he meditated against his native country one of the blackest schemes of treason that ever entered into the human heart.

The plan of Count Julian was to hurl King Roderick from his throne, and to deliver all Spain into the hands of the infidels. In concerting and executing this treacherous plot, it seemed as if his whole nature was changed; every lofty and generous sentiment was stifled, and he stooped to the meanest dissimulation. His first object was to extricate his family from the power of the king and to remove it from Spain before his treason should be known; his next, to deprive the country of its remaining means of defense against an invader.

With these dark purposes at heart, but with an open and serene countenance, he crossed to Spain and re-

paired to the court at Toledo. Wherever he came he was hailed with acclamation, as a victorious general, and appeared in the presence of his sovereign radiant with the victory at Ceuta. Concealing from King Roderick his knowledge of the outrage upon his house, he professed nothing but the most devoted loyalty and affection.

The king loaded him with favors, seeking to appease his own conscience by heaping honors upon the father in atonement of the deadly wrong inflicted upon his child. He regarded Count Julian, also, as a man able and experienced in warfare, and took his advice in all matters relating to the military affairs of the kingdom. The count magnified the dangers that threatened the frontier under his command, and prevailed upon the king to send thither the best horses and arms remaining from the time of Witiza, there being no need of them in the center of Spain, in its present tranquil state. The residue, at his suggestion, was stationed on the frontiers of Gallia; so that the kingdom was left almost wholly without defense against any sudden irruption from the south.

Having thus artfully arranged his plans, and all things being prepared for his return to Africa, he obtained permission to withdraw his daughter from the court and leave her with her mother, the Countess Frandina, who, he pretended, lay dangerously ill at Algeziras. Count Julian issued out of the gate of the city, followed by a shining band of chosen followers, while beside him, on a palfrey, rode the pale and weeping Florinda. The populace hailed and blessed him as he passed, but his heart turned from them with loathing. As he crossed the bridge of the Tagus he looked back with a dark brow upon Toledo, and raised his mailed hand and shook it at the royal palace of King Roderick which crested the rocky height. "A father's curse," said he, "be upon thee and thine! may desolation fall upon thy dwelling, and confusion and defeat upon thy realm!"

In his journeyings through the country he looked round him with a malignant eye; the pipe of the shepherd and the song of the husbandman were as discord to his soul; every sight and sound of human happiness sickened him at heart; and, in the bitterness of his spirit, he prayed that he might see the whole scene of prosperity laid waste with fire and sword by the invader.

The story of domestic outrage and disgrace had already been made known to the Countess Frandina. When the hapless Florinda came in presence of her mother she fell on her neck, and hid her face in her bosom, and wept; but the countess shed never a tear, for she was a woman haughty of spirit and strong of heart. She looked her husband sternly in the face. "Perdition light upon thy head," said she, "if thou submit to this dishonor. For my own part, woman as I am, I will assemble the followers of my house, nor rest until rivers of blood have washed away this stain."

"Be satisfied," replied the count; "vengeance is on foot, and will be sure and ample."

Being now in his own domains, surrounded by his relatives and friends, Count Julian went on to complete his web of treason. In this he was aided by his brother-in-law, Oppas, the bishop of Seville: a dark man and perfidious as the night, but devout in demeanor, and smooth and plausible in council. This artful prelate had contrived to work himself into the entire confidence of the king, and had even prevailed upon him to permit his nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the exiled sons of Witiza, to return into Spain. They resided in Andalusia, and were now looked to as fit instruments in the present traitorous conspiracy.

By the advice of the bishop, Count Julian called a secret meeting of his relatives and adherents on a wild, rocky mountain, not far from Consuegra, and which still bears the Moorish appellation of "La Sierra de Calderin," or the mountain of treason.* When all were assembled Count Julian appeared among them, accompanied by the bishop and by the Countess Frandina. Then gathering around him those who were of his blood and kindred, he revealed the outrage that had been offered to their house. He represented to them that Roderick was their legitimate enemy; that he had dethroned Witiza, their relation, and had now stained the honor of one of the most illustrious daughters of their line. The Countess Frandina seconded his words. She was a woman majestic in person and eloquent of tongue, and being inspired by a mother's feelings, her speech aroused the assembled cavaliers to fury.

* Bleda, cap. 5.

The count took advantage of the excitement of the moment to unfold his plan. The main object was to dethrone Don Roderick and give the crown to the sons of the late King Witiza. By this means they would visit the sins of the tyrant upon his head, and, at the same time, restore the regal honors to their line. For this purpose their own force would be insufficient, but they might procure the aid of Muza ben Nosier, the Arabian general, in Mauritania, who would, no doubt, gladly send a part of his troops into Spain to assist in the enterprise.

The plot thus suggested by Count Julian received the unholy sanction of Bishop Oppas, who engaged to aid it secretly with all his influence and means; for he had great wealth and possessions, and many retainers. The example of the reverend prelate determined all who might otherwise have wavered, and they bound themselves by dreadful oaths to be true to the conspiracy. Count Julian undertook to proceed to Africa and seek the camp of Muza, to negotiate for his aid, while the bishop was to keep about the person of King Roderick, and lead him into the net prepared for him.

All things being thus arranged, Count Julian gathered together his treasure, and taking his wife and daughter and all his household, abandoned the country he meant to betray, embarking at Malaga for Ceuta. The gate of the wall of that city, through which they went forth, continued for ages to bear the name of *Puerta de la Cava*, or the gate of the harlot; for such was the opprobrious and unmerited appellation bestowed by the Moors on the unhappy Florinda.*

CHAPTER IX.

SECRET VISIT OF COUNT JULIAN TO THE ARAB CAMP— FIRST EXPEDITION OF TARIK EL TUERTO.

WHEN Count Julian had placed his family in security in Ceuta, surrounded by soldiery devoted to his fortunes, he took with him a few confidential followers and de-

* Bleda., cap. 4.

parted in secret for the camp of the Arabian emir, Muza ben Nosier. The camp was spread out in one of those pastoral valleys which lie at the feet of the Barbary hills, with the great range of the Atlas Mountains towering in the distance. In the motley army here assembled were warriors of every tribe and nation that had been united by pact or conquest in the cause of Islam. There were those who had followed Muza from the fertile regions of Egypt across the deserts of Barca, and those who had joined his standard from among the sunburnt tribes of Mauritania. These were Saracen and Tartar, Syrian and Copt, and swarthy Moor; sumptuous warriors from the civilized cities of the East, and the gaunt and predatory rovers of the desert. The greater part of the army, however, was composed of Arabs; but differing greatly from the first rude hordes that enlisted under the banner of Mohammed. Almost a century of continual wars with the cultivated nations of the East had rendered them accomplished warriors; and the occasional sojourn in luxurious countries and populous cities had acquainted them with the arts and habits of civilized life. Still, the roving, restless and predatory habits of the genuine son of Ishmael prevailed, in defiance of every change of clime or situation.

Count Julian found the Arab conqueror Muza surrounded by somewhat of Oriental state and splendor. He was advanced in life, but of a noble presence, and concealed his age by tinging his hair and beard with henna. The count assumed an air of soldier-like frankness and decision when he came into his presence. "Hitherto," said he, "we have been enemies; but I come to thee in peace, and it rests with thee to make me the most devoted of thy friends. I have no longer country or king. Roderick the Goth is an usurper, and my deadly foe; he has wounded my honor in the tenderest point, and my country affords me no redress. Aid me in my vengeance, and I will deliver all Spain into thy hands—a land far exceeding in fertility and wealth all the vaunted regions thou hast conquered in Tingitania."

The heart of Muza leaped with joy at these words, for he was a bold and ambitious conqueror, and having overrun all Western Africa, had often cast a wistful eye to the mountains of Spain, as he beheld them brightening

beyond the waters of the strait. Still he possessed the caution of a veteran, and feared to engage in an enterprise of such moment, and to carry his arms into another division of the globe, without the approbation of his sovereign. Having drawn from Count Julian the particulars of his plan and of the means he possessed to carry it into effect, he laid them before his confidential counselors and officers, and demanded their opinion. "These words of Count Julian," said he, "may be false and deceitful; or he may not possess the power to fulfill his promises. The whole may be a pretended treason to draw us on to our destruction. It is more natural that he should be treacherous to us than to his country."

Among the generals of Muza was a gaunt, swarthy veteran, scarred with wounds; a very Arab, whose great delight was roving and desperate enterprise, and who cared for nothing beyond his steed, his lance, and scimitar. He was a native of Damascus; his name was Taric ben Zeyad, but, from having lost an eye, he was known among the Spaniards by the appellation of Taric el Tuerto, or Taric, the one-eyed.

The hot blood of this veteran Ishmaelite was in a ferment when he heard of a new country to invade and vast regions to subdue, and he dreaded lest the cautious hesitation of Muza should permit the glorious prize to escape them. "You speak doubtingly," said he, "of the words of this Christian cavalier, but their truth is easily to be ascertained. Give me four galleys and a handful of men, and I will depart with this Count Julian, skirt the Christian coast, and bring thee back tidings of the land, and of his means to put it in our power."

The words of the veteran pleased Muza ben Nosier, and he gave his consent; and Taric departed with four galleys and five hundred men, guided by the traitor Julian.* This first expedition of the Arabs against Spain took place, according to certain historians, in the year of our Lord seven hundred and twelve; though others differ on this point, as indeed they do upon almost every point in this early period of Spanish his-

* Beuter, *Cron. Gen. de España*, L. 1, c. 28. Marmol. *Descrip. de Africa*, L. 2, c. 10.

tory. The date to which the judicious chroniclers incline is that of seven hundred and ten, in the month of July. It would appear from some authorities, also, that the galleys of Taric cruised along the coasts of Andalusia and Lusitania, under the feigned character of merchant barks, nor is this at all improbable, while they were seeking merely to observe the land and get a knowledge of the harbors. Wherever they touched, Count Julian dispatched emissaries to assemble his friends and adherents at an appointed place. They gathered together secretly at Gezira Alhadra, that is to say, the Green Island, where they held a conference with Count Julian in presence of Taric ben Zeyad.* Here they again avowed their readiness to flock to his standard whenever it should be openly raised, and made known their various preparations for a rebellion. Taric was convinced, by all that he had seen and heard, that Count Julian had not deceived them, either as to his disposition or his means to betray his country. Indulging his Arab inclinations, he made an inroad into the land, collected great spoil and many captives, and bore off his plunder in triumph to Muza, as a specimen of the riches to be gained by the conquest of the Christian land.†

CHAPTER X.

LETTER OF MUZA TO THE CALIPH—SECOND EXPEDITION OF TARIK EL TUERTO.

ON hearing the tidings brought by Taric el Tuerto, and beholding the spoil he had collected, Muza wrote a letter to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, setting forth the traitorous proffer of Count Julian, and the probability, through his means, of making a successful invasion of Spain. "A new land," said he, "spreads itself out before our delighted eyes and invites our conquest. A land, too, that equals Syria in the fertility of its soil and the serenity of its sky; Yemen, or Arabia the happy, in its delightful temperature; India in its flowers and

* Bleda, Cron. c. 5.

† Conde, Hist. Dom Arab. part 1, c. 8.

spices; Hegiaz in its fruits and flowers; Cathay in its precious minerals, and Aden in the excellence of its ports and harbors. It is populous also, and wealthy; having many splendid cities and majestic monuments of ancient art. What is to prevent this glorious land from becoming the inheritance of the faithful? Already we have overcome the tribes of Berbery, of Zab, of Derar, of Zaara, Mazamuda and Sus, and the victorious standard of Islam floats on the towers of Tangier. But four leagues of sea separate us from the opposite coast. One word from my sovereign, and the conquerors of Africa will pour their legions into Andalusia, rescue it from the domination of the unbeliever, and subdue it to the law of the Koran."*

The caliph was overjoyed with the contents of the letter. "God is great!" exclaimed he, "and Mohammed is his prophet! It has been foretold by the ambassador of God that his law should extend to the ultimate parts of the West, and be carried by the sword into new and unknown regions. Behold, another land is opened for the triumphs of the faithful. It is the will of Allah, and be his sovereign will obeyed." So the caliph sent missives to Muza, authorizing him to undertake the conquest.

Upon this there was a great stir of preparation, and numerous vessels were assembled and equipped at Tangier to convey the invading army across the straits. Twelve thousand men were chosen for this expedition—most of them light Arabian troops, seasoned in warfare, and fitted for hardy and rapid enterprise. Among them were many horsemen, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds. The whole was put under the command of the veteran Taric el Tuerto, or the one-eyed, in whom Muza reposed implicit confidence as in a second self. Taric accepted the command with joy; his martial fire was roused at the idea of having such an army under his sole command, and such a country to overrun, and he secretly determined never to return unless victorious.

He chose a dark night to convey his troops across the straits of Hercules, and by break of day they began to disembark at Tarifa before the country had time to take the alarm. A few Christians hastily assembled from the

* Conde, part 1, c. 8.

neighborhood and opposed their landing, but were easily put to flight. Taric stood on the seaside and watched until the last squadron had landed, and all the horses, armor, and munitions of war were brought on shore; he then gave orders to set fire to the ships. The Moslems were struck with terror when they beheld their fleet wrapped in flames and smoke, and sinking beneath the waves. "How shall we escape," exclaimed they, "if the fortune of war should be against us?" "There is no escape for the coward!" cried Taric; "the brave man thinks of none; your only chance is victory." "But how without ships shall we ever return to our homes?" "Your home," replied Taric, "is before you; but you must win it with your swords."

While Taric was yet talking with his followers, says one of the ancient chroniclers, a Christian female was descried waving a white pennon on a reed, in signal of peace. On being brought into the presence of Taric she prostrated herself before him. "Señor," said she, "I am an ancient woman; and it is now full sixty years past and gone since, as I was keeping vigils one winter's night by the fireside, I heard my father, who was an exceeding old man, read a prophecy said to have been written by a holy friar; and this was the purport of the prophecy, that a time would arrive when our country would be invaded and conquered by a people from Africa of a strange garb, a strange tongue, and a strange religion. They were to be led by a strong and valiant captain, who would be known by these signs: on his right shoulder he would have a hairy mole, and his right arm would be much longer than the left, and of such length as to enable him to cover his knee with his hand without bending his body."

Taric listened to the old beldame with grave attention, and when she had concluded he laid bare his shoulder, and lo! there was the mole as it had been described; his right arm, also, was in verity found to exceed the other in length, though not to the degree that had been mentioned. Upon this the Arab host shouted for joy, and felt assured of conquest.

The discreet Antonio Agapida, though he records this circumstance as it is set down in ancient chronicle, yet withholds his belief from the pretended prophecy, con-

sidering the whole a cunning device of Taric to increase the courage of his troops. "Doubtless," says he, "there was a collusion between this ancient sibyl and the crafty son of Ishmael; for these infidel leaders were full of damnable inventions to work upon the superstitious fancies of their followers, and to inspire them with a blind confidence in the success of their arms."

Be this as it may, the veteran Taric took advantage of the excitement of his soldiery, and led them forward to gain possession of a stronghold, which was, in a manner, the key to all the adjacent country. This was a lofty mountain or promontory almost surrounded by the sea, and connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus. It was called the rock of Calpe, and, like the opposite rock of Ceuta, commanded the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Here, in old times, Hercules had set up one of his pillars and the city of Heraclea had been built.

As Taric advanced against this promontory he was opposed by a hasty levy of the Christians, who had assembled under the banner of a Gothic noble of great power and importance, whose domains lay along the mountainous coast of the Mediterranean. The name of this Christian cavalier was Theodomir, but he has universally been called Tadmir by the Arabian historians, and is renowned as being the first commander that made any stand against the inroad of the Moslems. He was about forty years of age, hardy, prompt, and sagacious; and had all the Gothic nobles been equally vigilant and shrewd in their defense, the banner of Islam would never have triumphed over the land.

Theodomir had but seventeen hundred men under his command, and these but rudely armed; yet he made a resolute stand against the army of Taric, and defended the pass to the promontory with great valor. He was at length obliged to retreat, and Taric advanced and planted his standard on the rock of Calpe, and fortified it as his stronghold, and as the means of securing an entrance into the land. To commemorate his first victory, he changed the name of the promontory, and called it Gibel Taric, or the Mountain of Tarib, but in process of time the name has gradually been altered to Gibraltar.

In the meantime, the patriotic chieftain Theodomir, having collected his routed forces, encamped with them

on the skirts of the mountains, and summoned the country round to join his standard. He sent off missives in all speed to the king, imparting in brief and blunt terms the news of the invasion, and craving assistance with equal frankness. "Señor," said he, in his letter, "the legions of Africa are upon us, but whether they come from heaven or earth I know not. They seem to have fallen from the clouds, for they have no ships. We have been taken by surprise, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retreat; and they have fortified themselves in our territory. Send us aid, señor, with instant speed, or rather, come yourself to our assistance."*

CHAPTER XI.

MEASURES OF DON RODERICK ON HEARING OF THE INVASION—EXPEDITION OF ATAULPHO—VISION OF TARIC.

WHEN Don Roderick heard that legions of turbaned troops had poured into the land from Africa, he called to mind the visions and predictions of the necromantic tower, and great fear came upon him. But, though sunk from his former hardihood and virtue, though enervated by indulgence and degraded in spirit by a consciousness of crime, he was resolute of soul, and roused himself to meet the coming danger. He summoned a hasty levy of horse and foot, amounting to forty thousand; but now were felt the effects of the crafty counsel of Count Julian, for the best of the horses and armor intended for the public service had been sent into Africa, and were really in possession of the traitors. Many nobles, it is true, took the field with the sumptuous array with which they had been accustomed to appear at tournaments and jousts, but most of their vassals were destitute of weapons, and cased in cuirasses of leather, or suits of armor almost consumed by rust. They were without discipline or animation; and their horses, like themselves, pampered by slothful peace, were little fitted to bear the heat, the dust, and toil of long campaigns.

* Conde, part 1, c. 9.

This army Don Roderick put under the command of his kinsman Ataulpho, a prince of the royal blood of the Goths, and of a noble and generous nature; and he ordered him to march with all speed to meet the foe, and to recruit his forces on the way with the troops of Theodomir.

In the meantime, Taric el Tuerto had received large reënforcements from Africa, and the adherents of Count Julian, and all those discontented with the sway of Don Roderick, had flocked to his standard; for many were deceived by the representations of Count Julian, and thought that the Arabs had come to aid him in placing the sons of Witiza upon the throne. Guided by the count, the troops of Taric penetrated into various parts of the country and laid waste the land, bringing back loads of spoil to their stronghold at the rock of Calpe.

The Prince Ataulpho marched with his army through Andalusia, and was joined by Theodomir with his troops; he met with various detachments of the enemy foraging the country and had several bloody skirmishes; but he succeeded in driving them before him, and they retreated to the rock of Calpe, where Taric lay gathered up with the main body of his army.

The prince encamped not far from the bay which spread itself out before the promontory. In the evening he dispatched the veteran Theodomir, with a trumpet, to demand a parley of the Arab chieftain, who received the envoy in his tent, surrounded by his captains. Theodomir was frank and abrupt in speech, for the most of his life had been passed far from courts. He delivered, in round terms, the message of the Prince Ataulpho; upbraiding the Arab general with his wanton invasion of the land, and summoning him to surrender his army or to expect no mercy.

The single eye of Taric el Tuerto glowed like a coal of fire at this message. "Tell your commander," replied he, "that I have crossed the strait to conquer Spain, nor will I return until I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him I have men skilled in war, and armed in proof, with whose aid I trust soon to give a good account of his rabble host."

A murmur of applause passed through the assemblage of Moslem captains. Theodomir glanced on them a look

of defiance, but his eye rested on a renegado Christian, one of his own ancient comrades, and a relation of Count Julian. "As to you, Don Graybeard," said he, "you who turn apostate in your declining age, I here pronounce you a traitor to your God, your king, and country; and stand ready to prove it this instant upon your body, if field be granted me."

The traitor knight was stung with rage at these words, for truth rendered them piercing to the heart. He would have immediately answered to the challenge, but Taric forbade it, and ordered that the Christian envoy should be conducted from the camp. "'Tis well," replied Theodomir, "God will give me the field which you deny. Let yon hoary apostate look to himself to-morrow in the battle, for I pledge myself to use my lance upon no other foe until it has shed his blood upon the native soil he has betrayed." So saying, he left the camp, nor could the Moslem chieftains help admiring the honest indignation of this patriot knight, while they secretly despised his renegado adversary.

The ancient Moorish chroniclers relate many awful portents and strange and mysterious visions, which appeared to the commanders of either army during this anxious night. Certainly it was a night of fearful suspense, and Moslem and Christian looked forward with doubt to the fortune of the coming day. The Spanish sentinel walked his pensive round, listening occasionally to the vague sounds from the distant rock of Calpe, and eyeing it as the mariner eyes the thunder-cloud, pregnant with terror and destruction. The Arabs, too, from their lofty cliffs beheld the numerous camp-fires of the Christians gradually lighted up, and saw that they were a powerful host; at the same time the night breeze brought to their ears the sullen roar of the sea which separated them from Africa. When they considered their perilous situation, an army on one side, with a whole nation aroused to reënforce it, and on the other an impassable sea, the spirits of many of the warriors were cast down, and they repented the day when they had ventured into this hostile land.

Taric marked their despondency, but said nothing. Scarce had the first streak of morning light trembled along the sea, however, when he summoned his principal

warriors to his tent. "Be of good cheer," said he; "Allah is with us, and has sent his Prophet to give assurance of his aid. Scarce had I retired to my tent last night, when a man of a majestic and venerable presence stood before me. He was taller by a palm than the ordinary race of men, his flowing beard was of a golden hue, and his eyes were so bright that they seemed to send forth flashes of fire. I have heard the Emir Bahamet, and other ancient men, describe the Prophet, whom they had seen many times while on earth, and such was his form and lineament. 'Fear nothing, O Taric, from the morrow,' said he; 'I will be with thee in the fight. Strike boldly, then, and conquer. Those of thy followers who survive the battle will have this land for an inheritance; for those who fall, a mansion in paradise is prepared, and immortal houris await their coming.' He spake and vanished; I heard a strain of celestial melody, and my tent was filled with the odors of Arabia the happy." "Such," say the Spanish chroniclers, "was another of the arts by which this arch son of Ishmael sought to animate the hearts of his followers; and the pretended vision has been recorded by the Arabian writers as a veritable occurrence. Marvelous, indeed, was the effect produced by it upon the infidel soldiery, who now cried out with eagerness to be led against the foe."

CHAPTER XII.

BATTLE OF CALPE—FATE OF ATAULPHO.

THE gray summits of the rock of Calpe brightened with the first rays of morning, as the Christian army issued forth from its encampment. The Prince Ataulpho rode from squadron to squadron, animating his soldiers for the battle. "Never should we sheathe our swords," said he, "while these infidels have a footing in the land. They are pent up within yon rocky mountain; we must assail them in their rugged hold. We have a long day before us; let not the setting sun shine upon one of their host who is not a fugitive, a captive, or a corpse."

The words of the prince were received with shouts,

and the army moved toward the promontory. As they advanced they heard the clash of cymbals and the bray of trumpets, and the rocky bosom of the mountain glittered with helms and spears and scimitars; for the Arabs, inspired with fresh confidence by the words of Taric, were sallying forth with flaunting banners to the combat.

The gaunt Arab chieftain stood upon a rock as his troops marched by; his buckler was at his back, and he brandished in his hand a double-pointed spear. Calling upon the several leaders by their names, he exhorted them to direct their attacks against the Christian captains, and especially against Ataulpho; "for the chiefs being slain," said he, "their followers will vanish from before us like the morning mist."

The Gothic nobles were easily to be distinguished by the splendor of their arms, but the Prince Ataulpho was conspicuous above all the rest for the youthful grace and majesty of his appearance, and the bravery of his array. He was mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, richly caparisoned with crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. His surcoat was of like color and adornment, and the plumes that waved above his burnished helmet were of the purest white. Ten mounted pages, magnificently attired, followed him to the field, but their duty was not so much to fight as to attend upon their lord, and to furnish him with steed or weapon.

The Christian troops, though irregular and undisciplined, were full of native courage; for the old warrior spirit of their Gothic sires still glowed in their bosoms. There were two battalions of infantry, but Ataulpho stationed them in the rear; "for God forbid," said he, "that foot-soldiers should have the place of honor in the battle, when I have so many valiant cavaliers." As the armies drew nigh to each other, however, it was discovered that the advance of the Arabs was composed of infantry. Upon this the cavaliers checked their steeds, and requested that the foot-soldiery might advance and disperse this losel crew, holding it beneath their dignity to contend with pedestrian foes. The prince, however, commanded them to charge; upon which, putting spurs to their steeds, they rushed upon the foe.

The Arabs stood the shock manfully, receiving the

horses upon the points of their lances; many of the riders were shot down with bolts from crossbows, or stabbed with the poniards of the Moslems. The cavaliers succeeded, however, in breaking into the midst of the battalion and throwing it into confusion, cutting down some with their swords, transpiercing others with their spears, and trampling many under the hoofs of their horses. At this moment they were attacked by a band of Spanish horsemen, the recreant partisans of Count Julian. Their assault bore hard upon their countrymen, who were disordered by the contest with the foot-soldiers, and many a loyal Christian knight fell beneath the sword of an unnatural foe.

The foremost among these recreant warriors was the renegado cavalier whom Theodomir had challenged in the tent of Taric. He dealt his blows about him with a powerful arm and with malignant fury, for nothing is more deadly than the hatred of an apostate. In the midst of his career he was espied by the hardy Theodomir, who came spurring to the encounter. "Traitor," cried he, "I have kept my vow. This lance has been held sacred from all other foes to make a passage for thy perjured soul." The renegado had been renowned for prowess before he became a traitor to his country, but guilt will sap the courage of the stoutest heart. When he beheld Theodomir rushing upon him he would have turned and fled; pride alone withheld him; and, though an admirable master of defense, he lost all skill to ward the attack of his adversary. At the first assault the lance of Theodomir pierced him through and through; he fell to the earth, gnashed his teeth as he rolled in the dust, but yielded his breath without uttering a word.

The battle now became general, and lasted throughout the morning with varying success. The stratagem of Taric, however, began to produce its effect. The Christian leaders and most conspicuous cavaliers were singled out and severally assailed by overpowering numbers. They fought desperately and performed miracles of prowess, but fell, one by one, beneath a thousand wounds. Still the battle lingered on throughout a great part of the day, and as the declining sun shone through the clouds of dust it seemed as if the conflicting hosts were wrapped in smoke and fire.

The Prince Ataulpho saw that the fortune of battle was against him. He rode about the field calling out the names of the bravest of his knights, but few answered to his call; the rest lay mangled on the field. With this handful of warriors he endeavored to retrieve the day, when he was assailed by Tenderos, a partisan of Count Julian, at the head of a body of recreant Christians. At sight of this new adversary fire flashed from the eyes of the prince, for Tenderos had been brought up in his father's palace. "Well dost thou, traitor!" cried he, "to attack the son of thy lord, who gave thee bread; thou, who hast betrayed thy country and thy God!"

So saying, he seized a lance from one of his pages and charged furiously upon the apostate; but Tenderos met him in mid career, and the lance of the prince was shivered upon his shield. Ataulpho then grasped his mace, which hung at his saddlebow, and a doubtful fight ensued. Tenderos was powerful of frame and superior in the use of his weapons, but the curse of treason seemed to paralyze his arm. He wounded Ataulpho slightly between the greaves of his armor, but the prince dealt a blow with his mace that crushed through helm and skull and reached the brains; and Tenderos fell dead to earth, his armor rattling as he fell.

At the same moment a javelin hurled by an Arab transpierced the horse of Ataulpho, which sank beneath him. The prince seized the reins of the steed of Tenderos, but the faithful animal, as though he knew him to be the foe of his late lord, reared and plunged and refused to let him mount. The prince, however, used him as a shield to ward off the press of foes, while with his sword he defended himself against those in front of him. Taric ben Zeyad arrived at the scene of conflict, and paused for a moment in admiration of the surpassing prowess of the prince; recollecting, however, that his fall would be a deathblow to his army, he spurred upon him, and wounded him severely with his scimitar. Before he could repeat his blow Theodomir led up a body of Christian cavaliers to the rescue, and Taric was parted from his prey by the tumult of the fight. The prince sank to the earth, covered with wounds and exhausted by the loss of blood. A faithful page drew him from under the hoofs of the horses, and, aided by a

veteran soldier, an ancient vassal of Ataulpho, conveyed him to a short distance from the scene of battle, by the side of a small stream that gushed out from among rocks. They stanchd the blood that flowed from his wounds and washed the dust from his face, and laid him beside the fountain. The page sat at his head and supported it on his knees, and the veteran stood at his feet, with his brow bent and his eyes full of sorrow. The prince gradually revived, and opened his eyes. "How fares the battle?" said he. "The struggle is hard," replied the soldier, "but the day may yet be ours."

The prince felt that the hour of his death was at hand, and ordered that they should aid him to rise upon his knees. They supported him between them, and he prayed fervently for a short time, when, finding his strength declining, he beckoned the veteran to sit down beside him on the rock. Continuing to kneel, he confessed himself to that ancient soldier, having no priest or friar to perform that office in this hour of extremity. When he had so done he sank again upon the earth and pressed it with his lips, as if he would take a fond farewell of his beloved country. The page would then have raised his head, but found that his lord had yielded up the ghost.

A number of Arab warriors who came to the fountain to slake their thirst cut off the head of the prince and bore it in triumph to Taric, crying, "Behold the head of the Christian leader." Taric immediately ordered that the head should be put upon the end of a lance, together with the surcoat of the prince, and borne about the field of battle, with the sound of trumpets, atabels, and cymbals.

When the Christians beheld the surcoat, and knew the features of the prince, they were struck with horror, and heart and hand failed them. Theodomir endeavored in vain to rally them; they threw by their weapons and fled; and they continued to fly, and the enemy to pursue and slay them, until the darkness of the night. The Moslems then returned and plundered the Christian camp, where they found abundant spoil.

CHAPTER XIII.

TERROR OF THE COUNTRY—RODERICK ROUSES HIMSELF
TO ARMS.

THE scattered fugitives of the Christian army spread terror throughout the land. The inhabitants of the towns and villages gathered around them as they applied at their gates for food, or laid themselves down faint and wounded beside the public fountains. When they related the tale of their defeat old men shook their heads and groaned, and the women uttered cries and lamentations. So strange and unlooked-for a calamity filled them with consternation and despair; for it was long since the alarm of war had sounded in their land, and this was a warfare that carried chains and slavery, and all kinds of horrors in its train.

Don Roderick was seated with his beautiful queen, Exilona, in the royal palace which crowned the rocky summit of Toledo, when the bearer of ill-tidings came galloping over the bridge of the Tagus. "What tidings from the army?" demanded the king, as the panting messenger was brought into his presence. "Tidings of great woe," exclaimed the soldier. "The prince has fallen in battle. I saw his head and surcoat upon a Moorish lance, and the army was overthrown and fled."

At hearing these words Roderick covered his face with his hands, and for some time sat in silence; and all his courtiers stood mute and aghast, and no one dared to speak a word. In that awful space of time passed before his thoughts all his errors and his crimes, and all the evils that had been predicted in the necromantic tower. His mind was filled with horror and confusion, for the hour of his destruction seemed at hand; but he subdued his agitation by his strong and haughty spirit; and when he uncovered his face no one could read on his brow the trouble and agony of his heart. Still every hour brought fresh tidings of disaster. Messenger after messenger came spurring into the city, distracting it with new alarms. The infidels, they said, were strengthening themselves in the land: host after host were pouring in from Africa: the seaboard of Andalusia glittered with spears and scimitars. Bands of turbaned horsemen had

overrun the plains of Sidonia, even to the banks of the Guadiana. Fields were laid waste, towns and cities plundered, the inhabitants carried into captivity, and the whole country lay in smoking desolation.

Roderick heard all these tidings with an undaunted aspect, nor did he ever again betray sign of consternation; but the anxiety of his soul was evident in his warlike preparations. He issued orders that every noble and prelate of his kingdom should put himself at the head of his retainers and take the field, and that every man capable of bearing arms should hasten to his standard, bringing whatever horse and mule and weapon he possessed; and he appointed the plain of Cordova for the place where the army was to assemble. Throwing by, then, all the trappings of his late slothful and voluptuous life, and arming himself for warlike action, he departed from Toledo at the head of his guard, composed of the flower of the youthful nobility. His queen, Exilona, accompanied him, for she craved permission to remain in one of the cities of Andalusia, that she might be near her lord in this time of peril.

Among the first who appeared to hail the arrival of the king at Cordova was the Bishop Oppas, the secret partisan of the traitor Julian. He brought with him his two nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the sons of the late King Witiza, and a great host of vassals and retainers, all well armed and appointed; for they had been furnished by Count Julian with a part of the arms sent by the king to Africa. The bishop was smooth of tongue and profound in his hypocrisy; his pretended zeal and devotion, and the horror with which he spoke of the treachery of his kinsman, imposed upon the credulous spirit of the king, and he was readily admitted into his most secret councils.

The alarm of the infidel invasion had spread throughout the land, and roused the Gothic valor of the inhabitants. On receiving the orders of Roderick, every town and hamlet, every mountain and valley, had sent forth its fighting men, and the whole country was on the march toward Andalusia. In a little while there were gathered together, on the plain of Cordova, near fifty thousand horsemen, and a countless host of foot-soldiers. The Gothic nobles appeared in burnished armor, curiously

inlaid and adorned, with chains and jewels of gold, and ornaments of precious stones, and silken scarfs, and surcoats of brocade, or velvet richly embroidered; betraying the luxury and ostentation into which they had declined from the iron hardihood of their warlike sires. As to the common people, some had lances and shields and swords and crossbows, but the greater part were unarmed, or provided merely with slings, and clubs studded with nails, and with the iron implements of husbandry; and many had made shields for themselves from the doors and windows of their habitations. They were a prodigious host, and appeared, say the Arabian chroniclers, like an agitated sea; but, though brave in spirit, they possessed no knowledge of warlike art, and were ineffectual through lack of arms and discipline.

Several of the most ancient and experienced cavaliers, beholding the state of the army, advised Don Roderick to await the arrival of more regular troops, which were stationed in Iberia, Cantabria, and Gallia Gothica; but this counsel was strenuously opposed by the Bishop Oppas, who urged the king to march immediately against the infidels. "As yet," said he, "their number is but limited, but every day new hosts arrive, like flocks of locusts, from Africa. They will augment faster than we; they are living, too, at our expense, and, while we pause, both armies are consuming the substance of the land."

King Roderick listened to the crafty counsel of the bishop, and determined to advance without delay. He mounted his war horse, Orelia, and rode among his troops assembled on that spacious plain, and wherever he appeared he was received with acclamations; for nothing so arouses the spirit of the soldier as to behold his sovereign in arms. He addressed them in words calculated to touch their hearts, and animate their courage. "The Saracens," said he, "are ravaging our land, and their object is our conquest. Should they prevail, your very existence as a nation is at an end. They will overturn your altars; trample on the cross; lay waste your cities; carry off your wives and daughters, and doom yourselves and sons to hard and cruel slavery. No safety remains for you but in the prowess of your arms. For my own part, as I am your king, so will I be your leader

and will be the foremost to encounter every toil and danger.”

The soldiery answered their monarch with loud acclamations, and solemnly pledged themselves to fight to the last gasp in defense of their country and their faith. The king then arranged the order of their march: all those who were armed with cuirasses and coats of mail were placed in the front and rear; the center of the army was composed of a promiscuous throng, without body armor, and but scantily provided with weapons.

When they were about to march the king called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honor of Spain; scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand, when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many ancient courtiers who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counseled the king not to set forward on his march that day; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance and gave it in charge of another standard bearer; then, commanding the trumpets to be sounded, he departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.

The field where this great army assembled was called, from the solemn pledge given by the nobles and the soldiery, *El Campo de la Verdad*; or, the Field of Truth; a name, says the sage chronicler Abulcasim, which it bears even to the present day.*

CHAPTER XIV.

MARCH OF THE GOTHIC ARMY—ENCAMPMENT ON THE BANKS OF THE GUADALETE—MYSTERIOUS PREDICTIONS OF A PALMER—CONDUCT OF PELISTES THEREUPON.

THE hopes of Andalusia revived as this mighty host stretched in lengthening lines along its fertile plains; from morn until night it continued to pour along, with sound of drum and trumpet; it was led on by the proud-

* *La Perdida de España*, cap. 9. Bleda, L. 2, c. 8.

est nobles and bravest cavaliers in the land, and, had it possessed arms and discipline, might have undertaken the conquest of the world.

After a few days' march Don Roderick arrived in sight of the Moslem army, encamped on the banks of the Guadalete,* where that beautiful stream winds through the fertile land of Xeres. The infidel host was far inferior in number to the Christians, but then it was composed of hardy and dexterous troops, seasoned to war and admirably armed. The camp shone gloriously in the setting sun, and resounded with the clash of cymbal, the note of the trumpet, and the neighing of fiery Arabian steeds. There were swarthy troops from every nation of the African coast, together with legions from Syria and Egypt, while the light Bedouins were careering about the adjacent plain. What grieved and incensed the spirits of the Christian warriors, however, was to behold, a little apart from the Moslem host, an encampment of Spanish cavaliers, with the banner of Count Julian waving above their tents. They were ten thousand in number, valiant and hardy men, the most experienced of Spanish soldiery, most of them having served in the African wars; they were well armed and appointed also, with the weapons of which the count had beguiled his sovereign; and it was a grievous sight to behold such good soldiers arrayed against their country and their faith.

The Christians pitched their tents about the hour of vespers, at a short league distant from the enemy, and remained gazing with anxiety and awe upon this barbaric host that had caused such terror and desolation in the land; for the first sight of a hostile encampment in a country disused to war is terrible to a newly enlisted soldier. A marvelous occurrence is recorded by the Arabian chroniclers as having taken place in the Christian camp; but discreet Spanish writers relate it with much modification, and consider it a stratagem of the wily Bishop Oppas to sound the loyalty of the Christian cavaliers.

As several leaders of the army were seated with the

* This name was given to it subsequently by the Arabs. It signifies the River of Death. Vide Pedraza, *Hist. Granad.* p. 3, c. 1.

bishop in his tent, conversing on the dubious fortunes of the approaching contest, an ancient pilgrim appeared at the entrance. He was bowed down with years, his snowy beard descended to his girdle, and he supported his tottering steps with a palmer's staff. The cavaliers rose and received him with great reverence as he advanced within the tent. Holding up his withered hand, "Woe, woe to Spain!" exclaimed he, "for the vial of the wrath of Heaven is about to be poured out. Listen, warriors, and take warning. Four months since, having performed my pilgrimage to the sepulcher of our Lord in Palestine, I was on my return toward my native land. Wearied and way-worn, I lay down one night to sleep beneath a palm-tree by the side of a fountain, when I was awakened by a voice saying unto me, in soft accents, 'Son of sorrow, why sleepest thou?' I opened my eyes and beheld one of fair and beauteous countenance, in shining apparel, and with glorious wings, standing by the fountain; and I said, 'Who art thou, who callest upon me in this deep hour of the night?'"

"'Fear not,' replied the stranger; 'I am an angel from heaven, sent to reveal unto thee the fate of thy country. Behold, the sins of Roderick have come up before God, and His anger is kindled against him, and He has given him up to be invaded and destroyed. Hasten then to Spain, and seek the camp of thy countrymen. Warn them that such only shall be saved as shall abandon Roderick; but those who adhere to him shall share his punishment, and shall fall under the sword of the invader.'"

The pilgrim ceased, and passed forth from the tent; certain of the cavaliers followed him to detain him, that they might converse further with him about these matters, but he was nowhere to be found. The sentinel before the tent said, "I saw no one come forth, but it was as if a blast of wind passed by me, and there was a rustling as of dry leaves."

The cavaliers remained looking upon each other with astonishment. The Bishop Oppas sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and shadowed by his overhanging brow. At length, breaking silence, in a low and faltering voice: "Doubtless," said he, "this message is from God; and since He has taken compassion upon us and

given us notice of His impending judgment, it behooves us to hold grave council, and determine how best we may accomplish His will and avert His displeasure."

The chiefs still remained silent as men confounded. Among them was a veteran noble named Pelistes. He had distinguished himself in the African wars, fighting side by side with Count Julian; but the latter had never dared to tamper with his faith, for he knew his stern integrity. Pelistes had brought with him to the camp his only son, who had never drawn a sword except in tourney. When the young man saw that the veterans held their peace the blood mantled in his cheek, and, overcoming his modesty, he broke forth with a generous warmth: "I know not, cavaliers," said he, "what is passing in your minds, but I believe this pilgrim to be an envoy from the devil; for none else could have given such dastard and perfidious counsel. For my own part, I stand ready to defend my king, my country, and my faith; I know no higher duty than this; and if God thinks fit to strike me dead in the performance of it, His sovereign will be done!"

When the young man had risen to speak his father had fixed his eyes upon him with a grave and stern demeanor, leaning upon a two-handed sword. As soon as the youth had finished Pelistes embraced him with a father's fondness. "Thou hast spoken well, my son," said he; "if I held my peace at the counsel of this losel pilgrim, it was but to hear thy opinion, and to learn whether thou wert worthy of thy lineage and of the training I had given thee. Hadst thou counseled otherwise than thou hast done, hadst thou shown thyself craven and disloyal, so help me God, I would have struck off thy head with this weapon which I hold in my hand. But thou hast counseled like a loyal and a Christian knight, and I thank God for having given me a son worthy to perpetuate the honors of my line. As to this pilgrim, be he saint or be he devil, I care not; this much I promise, that if I am to die in defense of my country and my king, my life shall be a costly purchase to the foe. Let each man make the same resolve, and I trust we shall yet prove the pilgrim a lying prophet." The words of Pelistes roused the spirits of many of the cavaliers; others, however, remained full of anxious forebod-

ing, and when this fearful prophecy was rumored about the camp, as it presently was by the emissaries of the bishop, it spread awe and dismay among the soldiery.

CHAPTER XV.

SKIRMISHING OF THE ARMIES—PELISTES AND HIS SON— PELISTES AND THE BISHOP.

ON the following day the two armies remained regarding each other with wary but menacing aspect. About noontide King Roderick sent forth a chosen force of five hundred horse and two hundred foot, the best armed of his host, to skirmish with the enemy, that, by gaining some partial advantage, they might raise the spirits of the army. They were led on by Theodimir, the same Gothic noble who had signalized himself by first opposing the invasion of the Moslems.

The Christian squadrons paraded with flying pennons in the valley which lay between the armies. The Arabs were not slow in answering their defiance. A large body of horsemen sallied forth to the encounter, together with three hundred of the followers of Count Julian. There was hot skirmishing about the field and on the banks of the river; many gallant feats were displayed on either side, and many valiant warriors were slain. As the night closed in the trumpets from either camp summoned the troops to retire from the combat. In this day's action the Christians suffered greatly in the loss of their distinguished cavaliers; for it is the noblest spirits who venture most and lay themselves open to danger; and the Moslem soldiers had instructions to single out the leaders of the adverse host. All this is said to have been devised by the perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had secret communications with the enemy, while he influenced the councils of the king; and who trusted that by this skirmishing warfare the flower of the Christian troops would be cut off and the rest disheartened.

On the following morning a larger force was ordered out to skirmish, and such of the soldiery as were unarmed were commanded to stand ready to seize the horses and strip off the armor of the killed and wounded.

Among the most illustrious of the warriors who fought that day was Pelistes, the Gothic noble who had so sternly checked the tongue of the Bishop Oppas. He led to the field a large body of his own vassals and retainers, and of cavaliers trained up in his house, who had followed him to the wars in Africa, and who looked up to him more as a father than a chieftain. Beside him was his only son, who now for the first time was fleshing his sword in battle. The conflict that day was more general and bloody than the day preceding; the slaughter of the Christian warriors was immense, from their lack of defensive armor; and as nothing could prevent the flower of the Gothic chivalry from spurring to the combat, the field was strewed with the bodies of the youthful nobles. None suffered more, however, than the warriors of Pelistes. Their leader himself was bold and hardy, and prone to expose himself to danger; but years and experience had moderated his early fire; his son, however, was eager to distinguish himself in this, his first essay, and rushed with impetuous ardor into the hottest of the battle. In vain his father called to caution him; he was ever in the advance, and seemed unconscious of the perils that surrounded him. The cavaliers and vassals of his father followed him with devoted zeal, and many of them paid for their loyalty with their lives. When the trumpets sounded in the evening for retreat the troops of Pelistes were the last to reach the camp. They came slowly and mournfully, and much decreased in number. Their veteran commander was seated on his war-horse, but the blood trickled from the greaves of his armor. His valiant son was borne on the shields of his vassals; when they laid him on the earth near to where the king was standing, they found that the heroic youth had expired of his wounds. The cavaliers surrounded the body and gave utterance to their grief, but the father restrained his agony and looked on with the stern resignation of a soldier.

Don Roderick surveyed the field of battle with a rueful eye, for it was covered with the mangled bodies of his most illustrious warriors; he saw, too, with anxiety, that the common people, unused to war and unsustained by discipline, were harassed by incessant toils and dangers, and were cooling in their zeal and courage.

The crafty Bishop Oppas marked the internal trouble of the king, and thought a favorable moment had arrived to sway him to his purpose. He called to his mind the various portents and prophecies which had forerun their present danger. "Let not my lord the king," said he, "make light of these mysterious revelations, which appear to be so disastrously fulfilling. The hand of Heaven appears to be against us. Destruction is impending over our heads. Our troops are rude and unskillful, but slightly armed, and much cast down in spirit. Better is it that we should make a treaty with the enemy, and, by granting part of his demands, prevent the utter ruin of our country. If such counsel be acceptable to my lord the king, I stand ready to depart upon an embassy to the Moslem camp."

Upon hearing these words, Pelistes, who had stood in mournful silence, regarding the dead body of his son, burst forth with honest indignation. "By this good sword," said he, "the man who yields such dastard counsel deserves death from the hand of his countryman rather than from the foe; and, were it not for the presence of the king, may I forfeit salvation if I would not strike him dead upon the spot."

The bishop turned an eye of venom upon Pelistes. "My lord," said he, "I, too, bear a weapon, and know how to wield it. Were the king not present, you would not dare to menace, nor should you advance one step without my hastening to meet you."

The king interposed between the jarring nobles, and rebuked the impetuosity of Pelistes, but at the same time rejected the counsel of the bishop. "The event of this conflict," said he, "is in the hand of God; but never shall my sword return to its scabbard while an infidel invader remains within the land."

He then held a council with his captains, and it was determined to offer the enemy general battle on the following day. A herald was dispatched defying Taric ben Zeyad to the contest, and the defiance was gladly accepted by the Moslem chieftain.* Don Roderick then formed the plan of action and assigned to each commander his several station, after which he dismissed his

* Bleda, Cronica.

officers, and each one sought his tent, to prepare by diligence or repose for the next day's eventful contest.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRAITOROUS MESSAGE OF COUNT JULIAN.

TARIC BEN ZEYAD had been surprised by the valor of the Christian cavaliers in the recent battles, and at the number and apparent devotion of the troops which accompanied the king to the field. The confident defiance of Don Roderick increased his surprise. When the herald had retired he turned an eye of suspicion on Count Julian. "Thou hast represented thy countrymen," said he, "as sunk in effeminacy and lost to all generous impulse; yet I find them fighting with the courage and the strength of lions. Thou hast represented thy king as detested by his subjects and surrounded by secret treason; but I behold his tents whitening the hills and dales, while thousands are hourly flocking to his standard. Woe unto thee if thou hast dealt deceitfully with us, or betrayed us with guileful words."

Don Julian retired to his tent in great trouble of mind, and fear came upon him that the Bishop Oppas might play him false; for it is the lot of traitors ever to distrust each other. He called to him the same page who had brought him the letter from Florinda, revealing the story of her dishonor.

"Thou knowest, my trusty page," said he, "that I have reared thee in my household, and cherished thee above all thy companions. If thou hast loyalty and affection for thy lord, now is the time to serve him. Hie thee to the Christian camp, and find thy way to the tent of the Bishop Oppas. If any one ask thee who thou art, tell them thou art of the household of the bishop, and bearer of missives from Cordova. When thou art admitted to the presence of the bishop, show him this ring, and he will commune with thee in secret. Then tell him Count Julian greets him as a brother, and demands how the wrongs of his daughter Florinda are to be redressed. Mark well his reply, and bring it word for word. Have thy lips closed, but thine eyes and ears

open; and observe everything of note in the camp of the king. So speed thee on thy errand—away, away!”

The page hastened to saddle a Barbary steed, fleet as the wind, and of a jet-black color, so as not to be easily discernible in the night. He girded on a sword and a dagger, slung an Arab bow with a quiver of arrows at his side, and buckler at his shoulder. Issuing out of the camp he sought the banks of the Guadalete, and proceeded silently along its stream, which reflected the distant fires of the Christian camp. As he passed by the place which had been the scene of the recent conflict he heard from time to time the groan of some expiring warrior who had crawled among the reeds on the margin of the river; and sometimes his steed stepped cautiously over the mangled bodies of the slain. The young page was unused to the sights of war, and his heart beat quick within him. He was hailed by the sentinels as he approached the Christian camp, and, on giving the reply taught him by Count Julian, was conducted to the tent of the Bishop Oppas.

The bishop had not yet retired to his couch. When he beheld the ring of Count Julian and heard the words of his message, he saw that the page was one in whom he might confide. “Hasten back to thy lord,” said he, “and tell him to have faith in me and all shall go well. As yet I have kept my troops out of the combat. They are all fresh, well armed, and well appointed. The king has confided to myself, aided by the Princes Evan and Siseburto, the command of a wing of the army. Tomorrow, at the hour of noon, when both armies are in the heat of action, we will pass over with our forces to the Moslems. But I claim the compact made with Taric ben Zeyad, that my nephews be placed in dominion over Spain, and tributary only to the Caliph of Damascus.” With this traitorous message the page departed. He led his black steed by the bridle, to present less mark for observation, as he went stumbling along near the expiring fires of the camp. On passing the last outpost, where the guards were half-slumbering on their arms, he was overheard and summoned, but leaped lightly into the saddle and put spurs to his steed. An arrow whistled by his ear, and two more stuck in the target which he had thrown upon his back. The clatter of swift hoofs

echoed behind him, but he had learned of the Arabs to fight and fly. Plucking a shaft from his quiver, and turning and rising in his stirrups as his courser galloped at full speed, he drew the arrow to the head and launched it at his pursuer. The twang of the bowstring was followed by the crash of armor and a deep groan, as the horseman tumbled to the earth. The page pursued his course without further molestation, and arrived at the Moslem camp before the break of day.

CHAPTER XVII.

LAST DAY OF THE BATTLE.

A LIGHT had burned throughout the night in the tent of the king, and anxious thoughts and dismal visions troubled his repose. If he fell into a slumber he beheld in his dreams the shadowy phantoms of the necromantic tower, or the injured Florinda, pale and disheveled, imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon his head. In the mid-watches of the night, when all was silent except the footsteps of the sentinel pacing before his tent, the king rose from his couch, and walking forth looked thoughtfully upon the martial scene before him. The pale crescent of the moon hung over the Moorish camp and dimly lighted up the windings of the Guadalete. The heart of the king was heavy and oppressed; but he felt only for himself, says Antonio Agapida; he thought nothing of the perils impending over the thousands of devoted subjects in the camp below him; sleeping, as it were, on the margin of their graves. The faint clatter of distant hoofs, as if in rapid flight, reached the monarch's ear, but the horsemen were not to be descried. At that very hour, and along the shadowy banks of that river, here and there gleaming with the scanty moonlight, passed the fugitive messenger of Count Julian, with the plan of the next day's treason.

The day had not yet dawned when the sleepless and impatient monarch summoned his attendants and arrayed himself for the field. He then sent for the venerable Bishop Urbino, who had accompanied him to the camp, and laying aside his regal crown, he knelt with

head uncovered, and confessed his sins before the holy man. After this a solemn mass was performed in the royal tent, and the eucharist administered to the monarch. When these ceremonies were concluded, he besought the archbishop to depart forthwith for Cordova, there to await the issue of the battle, and to be ready to bring forward reënforcements and supplies. The archbishop saddled his mule and departed just as the faint blush of morning began to kindle in the east. Already the camp resounded with the thrilling call of the trumpet, the clank of armor, and the tramp and neigh of steeds. As the archbishop passed through the camp he looked with a compassionate heart on this vast multitude, of whom so many were soon to perish. The warriors pressed to kiss his hand, and many a cavalier full of youth and fire received his benediction, who was to lie stiff and cold before the evening.

When the troops were marshaled for the field Don Roderick prepared to sally forth in the state and pomp with which the Gothic kings were wont to go to battle. He was arrayed in robes of gold brocade; his sandals were embroidered with pearls and diamonds; he had a scepter in his hand, and he wore a regal crown resplendent with inestimable jewels. Thus gorgeously appareled, he ascended a lofty chariot of ivory, the axletrees of which were of silver, and the wheels and pole covered with plates of burnished gold. Above his head was a canopy of cloth of gold embossed with armorial devices, and studded with precious stones.* This sumptuous chariot was drawn by milk-white horses, with caparisons of crimson velvet, embroidered with pearls. A thousand youthful cavaliers surrounded the car; all of the noblest blood and bravest spirit; all knighted by the king's own hand, and sworn to defend him to the last.

When Roderick issued forth in this resplendent state, says an Arabian writer, surrounded by his guards in gilded armor and waving plumes and scarfs and surcoats of a thousand dyes, it was as if the sun were emerging in the dazzling chariot of the day from amid the glorious clouds of morning.

* *Entrand. Chron. an. Chris. 714,*

As the royal car rolled along in front of the squadrons, the soldiers shouted with admiration. Don Roderick waved his scepter and addressed them from his lofty throne, reminding them of the horror and desolation which had already been spread through the land by the invaders. He called upon them to summon up the ancient valor of their race and avenge the blood of their brethren. "One day of glorious fighting," said he, "and this infidel horde will be driven into the sea or will perish beneath your swords. Forward bravely to the fight; your families are behind you praying for your success; the invaders of your country are before you; God is above to bless His holy cause, and your king leads you to the field." The army shouted with one accord, "Forward to the foe, and death be his portion who shuns the encounter!"

The rising sun began to shine along the glistening waters of the Guadalete as the Moorish army, squadron after squadron, came sweeping down a gentle declivity to the sound of martial music. Their turbans and robes, of various dyes and fashions, gave a splendid appearance to their host; as they marched, a cloud of dust arose and partly hid them from the sight, but still there would break forth flashes of steel and gleams of burnished gold, like rays of vivid lightning; while the sound of drum and trumpet, and the clash of Moorish cymbal, were as the warlike thunder within that stormy cloud of battle.

As the armies drew near each other the sun disappeared among gathering clouds, and the gloom of the day was increased by the columns of dust which rose from either host. At length the trumpets sounded for the encounter. The battle commenced with showers of arrows, stones, and javelins. The Christian foot-soldiers fought to disadvantage, the greater part being destitute of helm or buckler. A battalion of light Arabian horsemen, led by a Greek renegado named Maguel el Rumi, careered in front of the Christian line, launching their darts, and then wheeling off beyond the reach of the missiles hurled after them. Theodomir now brought up his seasoned troops into the action, seconded by the veteran Pelistes, and in a little while the battle became furious and promiscuous. It was glorious to behold the old Gothic valor shining forth in this hour of fearful

trial. Wherever the Moslems fell, the Christians rushed forward, seized upon their horses, and stripped them of their armor and their weapons. They fought desperately and successfully, for they fought for their country and their faith. The battle raged for several hours; the field was strewn with slain, and the Moors, overcome by the multitude and fury of their foes, began to falter.

When Taric beheld his troops retreating before the enemy he threw himself before them, and, rising in his stirrups, "O Moslems! conquerors of Africa!" cried he, "whither would you fly? The sea is behind you, the enemy before; you have no hope but in your valor and the help of God. Do as I do and the day is ours!"

With these words he put spurs to his horse and sprang among the enemy, striking to right and left, cutting down and destroying, while his steed, fierce as himself, trampled upon the foot-soldiers, and tore them with his teeth. At this moment a mighty shout arose in various parts of the field; the noontide hour had arrived. The Bishop Oppas with the two princes, who had hitherto kept their bands out of the fight, suddenly went over to the enemy, and turned their weapons upon their astonished countrymen. From that moment the fortune of the day was changed, and the field of battle became a scene of wild confusion and bloody massacre. The Christians knew not whom to contend with, or whom to trust. It seemed as if madness had seized upon their friends and kinsmen, and that their worst enemies were among themselves.

The courage of Don Roderick rose with his danger. Throwing off the cumbrous robes of royalty and descending from his car, he sprang upon his steed Orelia, grasped his lance and buckler, and endeavored to rally his retreating troops. He was surrounded and assailed by a multitude of his own traitorous subjects, but defended himself with wondrous prowess. The enemy thickened around him; his loyal band of cavaliers were slain, bravely fighting in his defense; the last that was seen of the king was in the midst of the enemy, dealing death at every blow.

A complete panic fell upon the Christians; they threw away their arms and fled in all directions. They were pursued with dreadful slaughter, until the darkness of

the night rendered it impossible to distinguish friend from foe. Taric then called off his troops from the pursuit and took possession of the royal camp; and the couch which had been pressed so uneasily on the preceding night by Don Roderick, now yielded sound repose to his conqueror.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE AFTER THE DEFEAT—THE FATE OF RODERICK.

ON the morning after the battle the Arab leader, Taric ben Zeyad, rode over the bloody field of the Guadalete, strewed with the ruins of those splendid armies which had so lately passed like glorious pageants along the river banks. There Moor and Christian, horseman and horse, lay gashed with hideous wounds; and the river, still red with blood, was filled with the bodies of the slain. The gaunt Arab was as a wolf roaming through the fold he had laid waste. On every side his eye reveled on the ruin of the country, on the wrecks of haughty Spain. There lay the flower of her youthful chivalry, mangled and destroyed, and the strength of her yeomanry prostrated in the dust. The Gothic noble lay confounded with his vassals; the peasant with the prince; all ranks and dignities were mingled in one bloody massacre.

When Taric had surveyed the field he caused the spoils of the dead and the plunder of the camp to be brought before him. The booty was immense. There were massy chains, and rare jewels of gold; pearls and precious stones; rich silks and brocades, and all other luxurious decorations in which the Gothic nobles had indulged in the latter times of their degeneracy. A vast amount of treasure was likewise found, which had been brought by Roderick for the expenses of the war.

Taric then ordered that the bodies of the Moslem warriors should be interred; as for those of the Christians, they were gathered in heaps, and vast pyres of wood

* This battle is called indiscriminately by historians the battle of Guadalete, or of Xeres, from the neighborhood of that city.

were formed, on which they were consumed. The flames of these pyres rose high in the air, and were seen afar off in the night; and when the Christians beheld them from the neighboring hills they beat their breasts and tore their hair, and lamented over them as over the funeral fires of their country. The carnage of that battle infected the air for two whole months, and bones were seen lying in heaps upon the field for more than forty years; nay, when ages had passed and gone, the husbandman, turning up the soil, would still find fragments of Gothic cuirasses and helmets, and Moorish scimitars, the relics of that dreadful fight.

For three days the Arabian horsemen pursued the flying Christians, hunting them over the face of the country, so that but a scanty number of that mighty host escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

Taric ben Zeyad considered his victory incomplete so long as the Gothic monarch survived; he proclaimed great rewards, therefore, to whomsoever should bring Roderick to him, dead or alive. A diligent search was accordingly made in every direction, but for a long time in vain; at length a soldier brought to Taric the head of a Christian warrior, on which was a cap decorated with feathers and precious stones. The Arab leader received it as the head of the unfortunate Roderick, and sent it, as a trophy of his victory, to Muza ben Nosier, who, in like manner, transmitted it to the caliph at Damascus. The Spanish historians, however, have always denied its identity.

A mystery has ever hung, and ever must continue to hang over the fate of King Roderick, in that dark and doleful day of Spain. Whether he went down amid the storm of battle and atoned for his sins and errors by a patriot grave, or whether he survived to repent of them in hermit exile, must remain matter of conjecture and dispute. The learned Archbishop Rodrigo, who has recorded the events of this disastrous field, affirms that Roderick fell beneath the vengeful blade of the traitor Julian, and thus expiated with his blood his crime against the hapless Florinda; but the archbishop stands alone in his record of the fact. It seems generally admitted that Orelia, the favorite war-horse, was found entangled in a marsh on the borders of the Guadalete,

with the sandals and mantle and royal insignia of the king lying close by him. The river at this place ran broad and deep, and was incumbered with the dead bodies of warriors and steeds; it has been supposed, therefore, that he perished in the stream; but his body was not found within its waters.

When several years had passed away, and men's minds, being restored to some degree of tranquillity, began to occupy themselves about the events of this dismal day, a rumor arose that Roderick had escaped from the carnage on the banks of the Guadalete, and was still alive. It was said that, having from a rising ground caught a view of the whole field of battle, and seen that the day was lost, and his army flying in all directions, he likewise sought his safety in flight. It is added that the Arab horsemen, while scouring the mountains in quest of fugitives, found a shepherd arrayed in the royal robes, and brought him before the conqueror, believing him to be the king himself. Count Julian soon dispelled the error. On being questioned, the trembling rustic declared that while tending his sheep in the folds of the mountains, there came a cavalier on a horse wearied and spent and ready to sink beneath the spur. That the cavalier with an authoritative voice and menacing air commanded him to exchange garments with him, and clad himself in his rude garb of sheep-skin, and took his crook and his scrip of provisions, and continued up the rugged defiles of the mountains leading toward Castile, until he was lost to view.*

This tradition was fondly cherished by many, who clung to the belief in the existence of their monarch as their main hope for the redemption of Spain. It was even affirmed that he had taken refuge, with many of his host, in an island of the "Ocean Sea," from whence he might yet return once more to elevate his standard, and battle for the recovery of his throne.

Year after year, however, elapsed, and nothing was heard of Don Roderick; yet, like Sebastian of Portugal, and Arthur of England, his name continued to be a rallying point for popular faith, and the mystery of his end

* Bleda, Cron. L. 2, c. 9. Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, L. 1, c. 10.

to give rise to romantic fables. At length, when generation after generation had sunk into the grave, and near two centuries had passed and gone, traces were said to be discovered that threw a light on the final fortunes of the unfortunate Roderick. At that time Don Alphonso the Great, King of Leon, had wrested the city of Viseo in Lusitania from the hands of the Moslems. As his soldiers were ranging about the city and its environs, one of them discovered in a field, outside of the walls, a small chapel or hermitage, with a sepulcher in front, on which was inscribed this epitaph in Gothic characters:

HIC REQUIESCIT RUDERICUS,

ULTIMUS REX GOTHORUM.

(Here lies Roderick,

The last king of the Goths.)

It has been believed by many that this was the veritable tomb of the monarch, and that in this hermitage he had finished his days in solitary penance. The warrior, as he contemplated the supposed tomb of the once haughty Roderick, forgot all his faults and errors, and shed a soldier's tear over his memory; but when his thoughts turned to Count Julian his patriotic indignation broke forth, and with his dagger he inscribed a rude malediction on the stone.

"Accursed," said he, "be the impious and headlong vengeance of the traitor Julian. He was a murderer of his king; a destroyer of his kindred; a betrayer of his country. May his name be bitter in every mouth, and his memory infamous to all generations!"

Here ends the legend of Don Roderick.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE FOREGOING LEGEND.

THE TOMB OF RODERICK.

THE venerable Sebastiano, Bishop of Salamanca, declares that the inscription on the tomb at Viseo in Portugal existed in his time, and that he had seen it. A particular account of the exile and hermit life of Rod-

erick is furnished by Berganza, on the authority of Portuguese chronicles.

Algunos historiadores Portugueses aseguran, que el Rey Rodrigo, perdida la battalla, huyo a tierra de Merida, y se recogio en el monasterio de Cauliniano, en donde, arrepentido de sus culpas, procuro confesarlas con muchas lagrimas. Deseando mas retiro, y escogiendo por compañero a un monge llamado Roman, y elevando la Imagen de Nazareth, que Cyriaco monge de nacion griego avra traído de Jerusalem al monasterio de Cauliniano, se subio á un monte muy aspero, que estaba sobre el mar, junto al lugar de Pedernéyra. Vivio Rodrigo en compania de el monge en el hueco de una gruta por espacio de un año; despues se passo á la ermita de san Miguel, que estaba cerca de Viseo, en donde murio y fue sepultado.

Puedese ver esta relacion en las notas de Don Thomas Tamayo sobre Paulo deacano. El chronicon de san Millan, que llega hasta el año 883, deze que, hasta su tiempo, si ignora el fin del Rey Rodrigo. Pocos años despues el Rey Don Alonzo el Magno, aviéndo gan ado la ciudad de Viseo, encontro en una iglesia el epitafio que en romance dize—*aqui yaze Rodrigo, ultimo Rey de los Godos.*—Berganza, L. 1, c. 13.

THE CAVE OF HERCULES.

As the story of the necromantic tower is one of the most famous as well as least credible points in the history of Don Roderick, it may be well to fortify or buttress it by some account of another marvel of the city of Toledo. This ancient city, which dates its existence almost from the time of the flood, claiming as its founder Tubal, the son of Japhet and grandson of Noah,* has been the warrior hold of many generations, and a strange diversity of races. It bears traces of the artifices and devices of its various occupants, and is full of mysteries and subjects for antiquarian conjecture and perplexity. It is built upon a high, rocky promontory, with the Tagus brawling round its base, and is overlooked by

* Salazar, Hist. Gran. Cardinal, Prologo, vol. i. plan 1.

cragged and precipitous hills. These hills abound with clefts and caverns; and the promontory itself, on which the city is built, bears traces of vaults and subterraneous habitations, which are occasionally discovered under the ruins of ancient houses, or beneath the churches and convents.

These are supposed by some to have been the habitations or retreats of the primitive inhabitants; for it was the custom of the ancients, according to Pliny, to make caves in high and rocky places, and live in them through fear of floods; and such a precaution, says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, in his history of Toledo, was natural enough among the first Toledans, seeing that they founded their city shortly after the deluge, while the memory of it was still fresh in their minds.

Some have supposed these secret caves and vaults to have been places of concealment of the inhabitants and their treasure during times of war and violence; or rude temples for the performance of religious ceremonies in times of persecution. There are not wanting other and grave writers who give them a still darker purpose. In these caves, say they, were taught the diabolical mysteries of magic; and here were performed those infernal ceremonies and incantations horrible in the eyes of God and man. "History," says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, "is full of accounts that the magi taught and performed their magic and their superstitious rites in profound caves and secret places; because, as this art of the devil was prohibited from the very origin of Christianity, they always sought for hidden places in which to practice it." In the time of the Moors this art, we are told, was publicly taught at their universities, the same as astronomy, philosophy and mathematics, and at no place was it cultivated with more success than at Toledo. Hence, this city has ever been darkly renowned for mystic science; insomuch that the magic art was called by the French and by other nations the *Arte Toledana*.

Of all the marvels, however, of this ancient, picturesque, romantic and necromantic city, none in modern times surpass the cave of Hercules, if we may take the account of Don Pedro de Roxas for authentic. The entrance to this cave is within the church of San Gines, situated in nearly the highest part of the city. The portal is se-

cured by massy doors opening within the walls of the church, but which are kept rigorously closed. The cavern extends under the city, and beneath the bed of the Tagus to the distance of three leagues beyond. It is in some places of rare architecture, built of small stones curiously wrought, and supported by columns and arches.

In the year 1546 an account of this cavern was given to the Archbishop and Cardinal Don Juan Martinez Siliceo, who, desirous of examining it, ordered the entrance to be cleaned. A number of persons, furnished with provisions, lanterns, and cords, then went in, and having proceeded about half a league, came to a place where there was a kind of chapel or temple, having a table or altar, with several statues of bronze in niches or on pedestals.

While they were regarding this mysterious scene of ancient worship or incantation, one of the statues fell, with a noise that echoed through the cavern, and smote the hearts of the adventurers with terror. Recovering from their alarm they proceeded onward, but were soon again dismayed by a roaring and rushing sound that increased as they advanced. It was made by a furious and turbulent stream, the dark waters of which were too deep and broad and rapid to be crossed. By this time their hearts were so chilled with awe, and their thoughts so bewildered, that they could not seek any other passage by which they might advance; so they turned back and hastened out of the cave. It was nightfall when they sallied forth, and they were so much affected by the terror they had undergone, and by the cold and damp air of the cavern, to which they were the more sensible from its being in the summer, that all of them fell sick and several of them died. Whether the archbishop was encouraged to pursue his research and gratify his curiosity, the history does not mention.

Alonzo Telles de Meneses, in his history of the world, records that not long before his time a boy of Toledo, being threatened with punishment by his master, fled and took refuge in this cave. Fancying his pursuer at his heels, he took no heed of the obscurity or coldness of the cave, but kept groping and blundering forward, until he came forth at three leagues' distance from the city.

Another and very popular story of this cave, current

among the common people, was that in its remote recesses lay concealed a great treasure of gold, left there by the Romans. Whoever would reach this precious hoard must pass through several caves or grottoes, each having its particular terror, and all under the guardianship of a ferocious dog, who has the key of all the gates, and watches day and night. At the approach of any one he shows his teeth and makes a hideous growling; but no adventurer after wealth has had courage to brave a contest with this terrific Cerberus.

The most intrepid candidate on record was a poor man who had lost his all, and had those grand incentives to desperate enterprise, a wife and a large family of children. Hearing the story of this cave, he determined to venture alone in search of the treasure. He accordingly entered, and wandered many hours, bewildered, about the cave. Often would he have returned, but the thoughts of his wife and children urged him on. At length he arrived near to the place where he supposed the treasure lay hidden; but here, to his dismay, he beheld the floor of the cavern strewn with human bones, doubtless the remains of adventurers like himself, who had been torn to pieces.

Losing all courage, he now turned and sought his way out of the cave. Horrors thickened upon him as he fled. He beheld direful phantoms glaring and gibbering around him, and heard the sound of pursuit in the echoes of his footsteps. He reached his home overcome with affright; several hours elapsed before he could recover speech to tell his story, and he died on the following day.

The judicious Don Pedro de Roxas holds the account of the buried treasure for fabulous, but the adventure of this unlucky man for very possible; being led on by avarice, or rather the hope of retrieving a desperate fortune. He moreover pronounces his dying shortly after coming forth as very probable; because the darkness of the cave, its coldness, the fright at finding the bones, the dread of meeting the imaginary dog—all joining to operate upon a man who was past the prime of his days, and enfeebled by poverty and scanty food, might easily cause his death.

Many have considered this cave as intended originally for a sally or retreat from the city in case it should be

taken; an opinion rendered probable, it is thought, by its grandeur and great extent.

The learned Salazar de Mendoza, however, in his history of the grand cardinal of Spain, affirms it as an established fact that it was first wrought out of the rock by Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah, and afterward repaired and greatly augmented by Hercules the Egyptian, who made it his habitation after he had erected his pillars at the straits of Gibraltar. Here, too, it is said, he read magic to his followers, and taught them those supernatural arts by which he accomplished his vast achievements. Others think that it was a temple dedicated to Hercules; as was the case, according to Pomponius Mela, with the great cave in the rock of Gibraltar; certain it is, that it has always borne the name of "The Cave of Hercules."

There are not wanting some who have insinuated that it was a work dating from the time of the Romans, and intended as a cloaca or sewer of the city; but such a groveling insinuation will be treated with proper scorn by the reader, after the nobler purposes to which he has heard this marvelous cavern consecrated.

From all the circumstances here adduced from learned and reverend authors, it will be perceived that Toledo is a city fruitful of marvels, and that the necromantic tower of Hercules has more solid foundation than most edifices of similar import in ancient history.

The writer of these pages will venture to add the result of his personal researches respecting the far-famed cavern in question. Rambling about Toledo in the year 1826 in company with a small knot of antiquity hunters, among whom was an eminent British painter,* and an English nobleman,† who has since distinguished himself in Spanish historical research, we directed our steps to the church of San Gines, and inquired for the portal of the secret cavern. The sacristan was a voluble and communicative man, and one not likely to be niggard of his tongue about anything he knew, or slow to boast of any marvel pertaining to his church; but he professed utter ignorance of the existence of any such portal. He remembered to have heard, however, that immediately

* Mr. D. W—kie.

† Lord Mah—n.

under the entrance to the church there was an arch of mason-work, apparently the upper part of some subterranean portal; but that all had been covered up and a pavement laid down thereon; so that whether it led to the magic cave or the necromantic tower remains a mystery, and so must remain until some monarch or archbishop shall again have courage and authority to break the spell.

LEGEND OF THE SUBJUGATION OF SPAIN.*

CHAPTER I.

CONSTERNATION OF SPAIN—CONDUCT OF THE CONQUERORS—MISSIVES BETWEEN TARIC AND MUZA.

THE overthrow of King Roderick and his army on the banks of the Guadalete threw open all Southern Spain to the inroads of the Moslems. The whole country fled before them; villages and hamlets were hastily abandoned; the inhabitants placed their aged and infirm, their wives and children, and their most precious effects, on mules and other beasts of burden, and, driving before them their flocks and herds, made for distant parts of the land—for the fastnesses of the mountains, and for such of the cities as yet possessed walls and bulwarks. Many gave out, faint and weary, by the way, and fell into the hands of the enemy; others, at the distant sight of a turban or a Moslem standard, or on hearing the clangor of a trumpet, abandoned their flocks and herds and hastened their flight with their families. If their pursuers gained upon them, they threw by their household goods and whatever was of burden, and thought themselves fortunate to escape, naked and destitute, to a place of refuge. Thus the roads were covered with scattered flocks and herds, and with spoil of all kind.

The Arabs, however, were not guilty of wanton cruelty or ravage; on the contrary, they conducted themselves

* In this legend most of the facts respecting the Arab inroads into Spain are on the authority of Arabian writers, who had the most accurate means of information. Those relative to the Spaniards are chiefly from old Spanish chronicles. It is to be remarked that the Arab accounts have most the air of verity, and the events as they relate them are in the ordinary course of common life. The Spanish accounts, on the contrary, are full of the marvelous; for there were no greater romancers than the monkish chroniclers.

with a moderation but seldom witnessed in more civilized conquerors. Taric el Tuerto, though a thorough man of the sword, and one whose whole thoughts were warlike, yet evinced wonderful judgment and discretion. He checked the predatory habits of his troops with a rigorous hand. They were forbidden, under pain of severe punishment, to molest any peaceable and unfortified towns, or any unarmed and unresisting people, who remained quiet in their homes. No spoil was permitted to be made excepting in fields of battle, in camps of routed foes, or in cities taken by the sword.

Taric had little need to exercise his severity; his orders were obeyed through love rather than fear, for he was the idol of his soldiery. They admired his restless and daring spirit, which nothing could dismay. His gaunt and sinewy form, his fiery eye, his visage seamed with scars, were suited to the hardihood of his deeds; and when mounted on his foaming steed, careering the field of battle with quivering lance or flashing scimitar, his Arabs would greet him with shouts of enthusiasm. But what endeared him to them more than all was his soldier-like contempt of gain. Conquest was his only passion; glory the only reward he coveted. As to the spoil of the conquered, he shared it freely among his followers, and squandered his own portion with open-handed generosity.

While Taric was pushing his triumphant course through Andalusia, tidings of his stupendous victory on the banks of the Guadalete were carried to Muza ben Nosier. Messengers after messengers arrived, vying who should most extol the achievements of the conqueror and the grandeur of the conquest. "Taric," said they, "has overthrown the whole force of the unbelievers in one mighty battle. Their king is slain; thousands and tens of thousands of their warriors are destroyed; the whole land lies at our mercy; and city after city is surrendering to the victorious arms of Taric."

The heart of Muza ben Nosier sickened at these tidings, and instead of rejoicing at the success of the cause of Islam, he trembled with jealous fear lest the triumphs of Taric in Spain should eclipse his own victories in Africa. He dispatched missives to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, informing him of these new conquests, but

taking the whole glory to himself, and making no mention of the services of Taric; or at least, only mentioning him incidentally as a subordinate commander. "The battles," said he, "have been terrible as the day of judgment; but by the aid of Allah we have gained the victory."

He then prepared in all haste to cross over into Spain and assume the command of the conquering army; and he wrote a letter in advance to interrupt Taric in the midst of his career. "Wherever this letter may find thee," said he, "I charge thee halt with thy army and await my coming. Thy force is inadequate to the subjugation of the land, and by rashly venturing, thou mayst lose everything. I will be with thee speedily, with a reënforcement of troops competent to so great an enterprise."

The letter overtook the veteran Taric while in the full glow of triumphant success, having overrun some of the richest parts of Andalusia, and just received the surrender of the city of Ecija. As he read the letter the blood mantled in his sunburnt cheek and fire kindled in his eye, for he penetrated the motives of Muza. He suppressed his wrath, however, and turning with a bitter expression of forced composure to his captains, "Unsaddle your steeds," said he, "and plant your lances in the earth; set up your tents and take your repose; for we must await the coming of the Wali with a mighty force to assist us in our conquest."

The Arab warriors broke forth with loud murmurs at these words: "What need have we of aid," cried they, "when the whole country is flying before us, and what better commander can we have than Taric to lead us on to victory?"

Count Julian, also, who was present, now hastened to give his traitorous counsel.

"Why pause," cried he, "at this precious moment? The great army of the Goths is vanquished, and their nobles are slaughtered or dispersed. Follow up your blow before the land can recover from its panic. Overrun the provinces, seize upon the cities, make yourself master of the capital, and your conquest is complete." *

* Conde, p. 1, c. 10.

The advice of Julian was applauded by all the Arab chieftains, who were impatient of any interruption in their career of conquest. Taric was easily persuaded to what was the wish of his heart. Disregarding the letter of Muza, therefore, he prepared to pursue his victories. For this purpose he ordered a review of his troops on the plain of Ecija. Some were mounted on steeds which they had brought from Africa; the rest he supplied with horses taken from the Christians. He repeated his general orders, that they should inflict no wanton injury, nor plunder any place that offered no resistance. They were forbidden, also, to incumber themselves with booty, or even with provisions; but were to scour the country with all speed, and seize upon all its fortresses and strongholds.

He then divided his host into three several armies. One he placed under the command of the Greek renegade, Magued el Rumi, a man of desperate courage; and sent it against the ancient city of Cordova. Another was sent against the city of Malaga, and was led by Zayd ben Kesadi, aided by the Bishop Oppas. The third was led by Taric himself, and with this he determined to make a wide sweep through the kingdom.*

CHAPTER II.

CAPTURE OF GRANADA—SUBJUGATION OF THE ALPUXARRA MOUNTAINS.

THE terror of the arms of Taric ben Zeyad went before him; and, at the same time, the report of his lenity to those who submitted without resistance. Wherever he appeared, the towns, for the most part, sent forth some of their principal inhabitants to proffer a surrender; for they were destitute of fortifications, and their fighting men had perished in battle. They were all received into allegiance to the caliph, and were protected from pillage or molestation.

After marching some distance through the country, he entered one day a vast and beautiful plain, inter-

* *Cronica de España*, de Alonzo el Sabio. P 3, c. 1.

persed with villages, adorned with groves and gardens, watered by winding rivers, and surrounded by lofty mountains. It was the famous vega, or plain of Granada, destined to be for ages the favorite abode of the Moslems. When the Arab conquerors beheld this delicious vega they were lost in admiration; for it seemed as if the Prophet had given them a paradise on earth, as a reward for their services in his cause.

Taric approached the city of Granada, which had a formidable aspect, seated on lofty hills and fortified with Gothic walls and towers, and with the red castle or citadel, built in times of old by the Phœnicians or the Romans. As the Arab chieftain eyed the place he was pleased with its stern warrior look, contrasting with the smiling beauty of its vega, and the freshness and voluptuous abundance of its hills and valleys. He pitched his tents before its walls, and made preparations to attack it with all his force.

The city, however, bore but the semblance of power. The flower of its youth had perished in the battle of the Gaudalete; many of the principal inhabitants had fled to the mountains, and few remained in the city excepting old men, women, and children, and a number of Jews, which last were well disposed to take part with the conquerors. The city, therefore, readily capitulated, and was received into vassalage on favorable terms. The inhabitants were to retain their property, their laws, and their religion; their churches and priests were to be respected; and no other tribute was required of them than such as they had been accustomed to pay to their Gothic kings.

On taking possession of Granada Taric garrisoned the towers and castles, and left as alcaide or governor a chosen warrior named Betiz Aben Habuz, a native of Arabia Felix, who had distinguished himself by his valor and abilities. This alcaide subsequently made himself king of Granada, and built a palace on one of its hills; the remains of which may be seen at the present day.*

*The house shown as the ancient residence of Aben Habuz is called *la Casa del Gallo*, or the house of the weathercock; so named, says Pedraza, in his history of Granada, from a bronze figure of an Arab horseman, armed with lance and buckler, which once sur-

Even the delights of Granada had no power to detain the active and ardent Taric. To the east of the city he beheld a lofty chain of mountains, towering to the sky, and crowned with shining snow. These were the "Mountains of the Sun and Air;" and the perpetual snows on their summits gave birth to streams that fertilized the plains. In their bosoms, shut up among cliffs and precipices, were many small valleys of great beauty and abundance. The inhabitants were a bold and hardy race, who looked upon their mountains as everlasting fortresses that could never be taken. The inhabitants of the surrounding country had fled to these natural fastnesses for refuge, and driven thither their flocks and herds.

Taric felt that the dominion he had acquired of the plains would be insecure until he had penetrated and subdued these haughty mountains. Leaving Aben Habuz, therefore, in command of Granada, he marched with his army across the vega, and entered the folds of the Sierra, which stretched toward the south. The inhabitants fled with affright on hearing the Moorish trumpets, or beholding the approach of the turbaned horsemen, and plunged deeper into the recesses of their mountains. As the army advanced the roads became more and more rugged and difficult, sometimes climbing great rocky heights, and at other times descending abruptly into deep ravines, the beds of winter torrents. The mountains were strangely wild and sterile, broken into cliffs and precipices of variegated marble. At their feet were little valleys enameled with groves and gardens,

mounted it, and which varied with every wind. On this warlike weathercock was inscribed, in Arabic characters:

Dice el sabio Aben Habuz
Que asi se defiende el Andaluz.

(In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
The Andalusian his foe defies.)

The Casa del Gallo, even until within twenty years, possessed two great halls beautifully decorated with Morisco reliefs. It then caught fire and was so damaged as to require to be nearly rebuilt. It is now a manufactory of coarse canvas, and has nothing of the Moorish character remaining. It commands a beautiful view of the city and the vega.

interlaced with silver streams, and studded with villages and hamlets, but all deserted by their inhabitants. No one appeared to dispute the inroad of the Moslems, who continued their march with increasing confidence, their pennons fluttering from rock and cliff, and the valleys echoing to the din of trumpet, drum, and cymbal. At length they came to a defile where the mountains seemed to have been rent asunder to make way for a foaming torrent. The narrow and broken road wound along the dizzy edge of precipices, until it came to where a bridge was thrown across the chasm. It was a fearful and gloomy pass; great beetling cliffs overhung the road, and the torrent roared below. This awful defile has ever been famous in the warlike history of those mountains, by the name, in former times, of the Barranco de Tocos, and at present of the bridge of Tablete. The Saracen army entered fearlessly into the pass; a part had already crossed the bridge, and was slowly toiling up the rugged road on the opposite side, when great shouts arose, and every cliff appeared suddenly peopled with furious foes. In an instant a deluge of missiles of every sort was rained upon the astonished Moslems. Darts, arrows, javelins, and stones, came whistling down, singling out the most conspicuous cavaliers; and at times great masses of rock, bounding and thundering along the mountain side, crushed whole ranks at once, or hurled horses and riders over the edge of the precipices.

It was in vain to attempt to brave this mountain warfare. The enemy were beyond the reach of missiles, and safe from pursuit; and the horses of the Arabs were here an incumbrance rather than an aid. The trumpets sounded a retreat and the army retired in tumult and confusion, harassed by the enemy until extricated from the defile. Taric, who had beheld cities and castles surrendering without a blow, was enraged at being braved by a mere horde of mountain boors, and made another attempt to penetrate the mountains, but was again waylaid and opposed with horrible slaughter.

The fiery son of Ishmael foamed with rage at being thus checked in his career and foiled in his revenge. He was on the point of abandoning the attempt, and returning to the vega, when a Christian boor sought his camp, and was admitted to his presence. The miserable wretch

possessed a cabin and a little patch of ground among the mountains, and offered, if these should be protected from ravage, to inform the Arab commander of a way by which troops of horse might be safely introduced into the bosom of the sierra, and the whole subdued. The name of this caitiff was Fandino, and it deserves to be perpetually recorded with ignominy. His case is an instance how much it is in the power, at times, of the most insignificant being to do mischief, and how all the valor of the magnanimous and the brave may be defeated by the treason of the selfish and the despicable.

Instructed by this traitor, the Arab commander caused ten thousand foot-soldiers and four thousand horsemen, commanded by a valiant captain, named Ibrahim Albuxarra, to be conveyed by sea to the little port of Adra, at the Mediterranean foot of the mountains. Here they landed and, guided by the traitor, penetrated to the heart of the sierra, laying everything waste. The brave mountaineers, thus hemmed in between two armies, destitute of fortresses and without hope of succor, were obliged to capitulate; but their valor was not without avail, for never, even in Spain, did vanquished people surrender on prouder or more honorable terms. We have named the wretch who betrayed his native mountains; let us, equally, record the name of him whose pious patriotism saved them from desolation. It was the reverend Bishop Centerio. While the warriors rested on their arms in grim and menacing tranquillity among the cliffs, this venerable prelate descended to the Arab tents in the valley, to conduct the capitulation. In stipulating for the safety of his people, he did not forget that they were brave men, and that they still had weapons in their hands. He obtained conditions accordingly. It was agreed that they should be permitted to retain their houses, lands, and personal effects; that they should be unmolested in their religion, and their temples and priests respected; and that they should pay no other tribute than such as they had been accustomed to render to their kings. Should they prefer to leave the country and to remove to any part of Christendom, they were to be allowed to sell their possessions; and to take with them the money, and all their other effects.*

* Pedraza, Hist. Granad. p. 3, c. 2. Bleda, Cronica, L. 2, c. 10.

Ibrahim Albuxarra remained in command of the territory, and the whole sierra, or chain of mountains, took his name, which has since been slightly corrupted into that of the Alpuxarras. The subjugation of this rugged region, however, was for a long time incomplete; many of the Christians maintained a wild and hostile independence, living in green glens and scanty valleys among the heights; and the sierra of the Alpuxarras has, in all ages, been one of the most difficult parts of Andalusia to be subdued.

CHAPTER III.

EXPEDITION OF MAGUED AGAINST CORDOVA — DEFENSE OF THE PATRIOT PELISTES.

WHILE the veteran Taric was making this wide circuit through the land, the expedition under Magued the renegado proceeded against the city of Cordova. The inhabitants of that ancient place had beheld the great army of Don Roderick spreading like an inundation over the plain of the Guadalquivir, and had felt confident that it must sweep the infidel invaders from the land. What then was their dismay, when scattered fugitives, wild with horror and affright, brought them tidings of the entire overthrow of that mighty host, and the disappearance of the king! In the midst of their consternation, the Gothic noble, Pelistes, arrived at their gates, haggard with fatigue of body and anguish of mind, and leading a remnant of his devoted cavaliers, who had survived the dreadful battle of the Guadalete. The people of Cordova knew the valiant and steadfast spirit of Pelistes, and rallied round him as a last hope. "Roderick is fallen," cried they, "and we have neither king nor captain; be unto us as a sovereign; take command of our city, and protect us in this hour of peril!"

The heart of Pelistes was free from ambition, and was too much broken by grief to be flattered by the offer of command; but he felt above everything for the woes of his country, and was ready to assume any desperate service in her cause. "Your city," said he, "is surrounded by walls and towers, and may yet check the

progress of the foe. Promise to stand by me till the last, and I will undertake your defense." The inhabitants all promised implicit obedience and devoted zeal; for what will not the inhabitants of a wealthy city promise and profess in a moment of alarm? The instant, however, that they heard of the approach of the Moslem troops, the wealthier citizens packed up their effects and fled to the mountains, or to the distant city of Toledo. Even the monks collected the riches of their convents and churches, and fled. Pelistes, though he saw himself thus deserted by those who had the greatest interest in the safety of the city, yet determined not to abandon its defense. He had still his faithful though scanty band of cavaliers, and a number of fugitives of the army; in all amounting to about four hundred men. He stationed guards, therefore, at the gates and in the towers, and made every preparation for a desperate resistance.

In the meantime, the army of Moslems and apostate Christians advanced, under the command of the Greek renegado, Magued, and guided by the traitor Julian. While they were yet at some distance from the city their scouts brought to them a shepherd, whom they had surprised on the banks of the Guadalquivir. The trembling hind was an inhabitant of Cordova, and revealed to them the state of the place, and the weakness of its garrison.

"And the walls and gates," said Magued, "are they strong and well guarded?"

"The walls are high, and of wondrous strength," replied the shepherd, "and soldiers hold watch at the gates by day and night. But there is one place where the city may be secretly entered. In a part of the wall, not far from the bridge, the battlements are broken, and there is a breach at some height from the ground. Hard by stands a fig-tree, by the aid of which the wall may easily be scaled."

Having received this information, Magued halted with his army, and sent forward several renegade Christians, partisans of Count Julian, who entered Cordova as if flying before the enemy. On a dark and tempestuous night the Moslems approached to the end of the bridge which crosses the Guadalquivir, and remained in ambush. Magued took a small party of chosen men and,

guided by the shepherd, forded the stream and groped silently along the wall to the place where stood the figtree. The traitors, who had fraudulently entered the city, were ready on the wall to render assistance. Magued ordered his followers to make use of the long folds of their turbans instead of cords, and succeeded without difficulty in clambering into the breach.

Drawing their scimitars, they now hastened to the gate which opened toward the bridge; the guards, suspecting no assault from within, were taken by surprise, and easily overpowered; the gate was thrown open, and the army that had remained in ambush rushed over the bridge and entered without opposition.

The alarm had by this time spread throughout the city; but already a torrent of armed men was pouring through the streets. Pelistes sallied forth with his cavaliers and such of the soldiery as he could collect, and endeavored to repel the foe; but every effort was in vain. The Christians were slowly driven from street to street, and square to square, disputing every inch of ground; until, finding another body of the enemy approaching to attack them in rear, they took refuge in a convent, and succeeded in throwing to and barring the ponderous doors. The Moors attempted to force the gates, but were assailed with such showers of missiles from the windows and battlements that they were obliged to retire. Pelistes examined the convent, and found it admirably calculated for defense. It was of great extent, with spacious courts and cloisters. The gates were massive, and secured with bolts and bars; the walls were of great thickness; the windows high and grated; there was a great tank or cistern of water, and the friars, who had fled from the city, had left behind a good supply of provisions. Here, then, Pelistes proposed to make a stand, and to endeavor to hold out until succor should arrive from some other city. His proposition was received with shouts by his loyal cavaliers, not one of whom but was ready to lay down his life in the service of his commander.

CHAPTER IV.

DEFENSE OF THE CONVENT OF ST. GEORGE BY PELISTES.

FOR three long and anxious months did the good knight Pelistes and his cavaliers defend their sacred asylum against the repeated assaults of the infidels. The standard of the true faith was constantly displayed from the loftiest tower, and a fire blazed there throughout the night, as signals of distress to the surrounding country. The watchman from his turret kept a wary lookout over the land, hoping in every cloud of dust to descry the glittering helms of Christian warriors. The country, however, was forlorn and abandoned, or if perchance a human being was perceived, it was some Arab horseman, careering the plain of the Guadalquivir as fearlessly as if it were his native desert.

By degrees the provisions of the convent were consumed, and the cavaliers had to slay their horses, one by one, for food. They suffered the wasting miseries of famine without a murmur, and always met their commander with a smile. Pelistes, however, read their sufferings in their wan and emaciated countenances, and felt more for them than for himself. He was grieved at heart that such loyalty and valor should only lead to slavery or death, and resolved to make one desperate attempt for their deliverance. Assembling them one day in the court of the convent he disclosed to them his purpose.

“Comrades and brothers in arms,” said he, “it is needless to conceal danger from brave men. Our case is desperate; our countrymen either know not or heed not our situation, or have not the means to help us. There is but one chance of escape; it is full of peril, and, as your leader, I claim the right to brave it. To-morrow at break of day I will sally forth and make for the city gates at the moment of their being opened; no one will suspect a solitary horseman; I shall be taken for one of those recreant Christians who have basely mingled with the enemy. If I succeed in getting out of the city I will hasten to Toledo for assistance. In all events I shall be back in less than twenty days. Keep a vigilant lookout toward the nearest mountain. If you behold five lights

blazing upon its summit, be assured I am at hand with succor, and prepare yourselves to sally forth upon the city as I attack the gates. Should I fail in obtaining aid, I will return to die with you."

When he had finished his warriors would fain have severally undertaken the enterprise, and they remonstrated against his exposing himself to such peril; but he was not to be shaken from his purpose. On the following morning, ere the break of day, his horse was led forth, caparisoned, into the court of the convent, and Pelistes appeared in complete armor. Assembling his cavaliers in the chapel, he prayed with them for some time before the altar of the holy Virgin. Then rising and standing in the midst of them, "God knows, my companions," said he, "whether we have any longer a country; if not, better were we in our graves. Loyal and true have ye been to me, and loyal have ye been to my son, even to the hour of his death; and grieved am I that I have no other means of proving my love for you than by adventuring my worthless life for your deliverance. All I ask of you before I go is a solemn promise to defend yourselves to the last like brave men and Christian cavaliers, and never to renounce your faith or throw yourselves on the mercy of the renegado Magued, or the traitor Julian." They all pledged their words, and took a solemn oath to the same effect before the altar.

Pelistes then embraced them one by one, and gave them his benediction, and as he did so his heart yearned over them, for he felt toward them, not merely as a companion in arms and as a commander, but as a father; and he took leave of them as if he had been going to his death. The warriors, on their part, crowded round him in silence, kissing his hands and the hem of his surcoat, and many of the sternest shed tears.

The gray of the dawning had just streaked the east when Pelistes took lance in hand, hung his shield about his neck and, mounting his steed, issued quietly forth from a postern of the convent. He paced slowly through the vacant streets, and the tramp of his steed echoed afar in that silent hour; but no one suspected a warrior, moving thus singly and tranquilly in an armed city, to be an enemy. He arrived at the gate just at the

hour of opening; a foraging party was entering with cattle and with beasts of burden, and he passed unheeded through the throng. As soon as he was out of sight of the soldiers who guarded the gate he quickened his pace, and at length, galloping at full speed, succeeded in gaining the mountains. Here he paused, and alighted at a solitary farmhouse to breathe his panting steed; but had scarce put foot to ground when he heard the distant sound of pursuit, and beheld a horseman spurring up the mountain.

Throwing himself again upon his steed, he abandoned the road and galloped across the rugged heights. The deep dry channel of a torrent checked his career, and his horse, stumbling upon the margin, rolled with his rider to the bottom. Pelistes was sorely bruised by the fall, and his whole visage was bathed in blood. His horse, too, was maimed and unable to stand, so that there was no hope of escape. The enemy drew near, and proved to be no other than Magued, the renegado general, who had perceived him as he issued forth from the city and had followed singly in pursuit. "Well met, Señor Alcaide!" exclaimed he, "and overtaken in good time. Surrender yourself my prisoner."

Pelistes made no other reply than by drawing his sword, bracing his shield, and preparing for defense. Magued, though an apostate, and a fierce warrior, possessed some sparks of knightly magnanimity. Seeing his adversary dismounted, he disdained to take him at a disadvantage, but, alighting, tied his horse to a tree.

The conflict that ensued was desperate and doubtful, for seldom had two warriors met so well matched or of equal prowess. Their shields were hacked to pieces, the ground was strewed with fragments of their armor, and stained with their blood. They paused repeatedly to take breath; regarding each other with wonder and admiration. Pelistes, however, had been previously injured by his fall, and fought to great disadvantage. The renegado perceived it, and sought not to slay him, but to take him alive. Shifting his ground continually, he wearied his antagonist, who was growing weaker and weaker from the loss of blood. At length Pelistes seemed to summon up all his remaining strength to make a signal blow; it was skillfully parried, and he fell

prostrate upon the ground. The renegado ran up and, putting his foot upon his sword and the point of his scimitar to his throat, called upon him to ask his life; but Pelistes lay without sense, and as one dead. Magued then unlaced the helmet of his vanquished enemy, and seated himself on a rock beside him, to recover breath. In this situation the warriors were found by certain Moorish cavaliers, who marveled much at the traces of that stern and bloody combat.

Finding there was yet life in the Christian knight, they laid him upon one of their horses and, aiding Magued to remount his steed, proceeded slowly to the city. As the convoy passed by the convent, the cavaliers looked forth and beheld their commander borne along bleeding and a captive. Furious at the sight, they sallied forth to the rescue, but were repulsed by a superior force and driven back to the great portal of the church. The enemy entered pellmell with them, fighting from aisle to aisle, from altar to altar, and in the courts and cloisters of the convent. The greater part of the cavaliers died bravely, sword in hand; the rest were disabled with wounds and made prisoners. The convent, which was lately their castle, was now made their prison, and in after-times, in commemoration of this event, was consecrated by the name of St. George of the Captives.

CHAPTER V.

MEETING BETWEEN THE PATRIOT PELISTES AND THE TRAITOR JULIAN.

THE loyalty and prowess of the good knight Pelistes had gained him the reverence even of his enemies. He was for a long time disabled by his wounds, during which he was kindly treated by the Arab chieftains, who strove by every courteous means to cheer his sadness and make him forget that he was a captive. When he was recovered from his wounds they gave him a magnificent banquet, to testify their admiration of his virtues.

Pelistes appeared at the banquet clad in sable armor, and with a countenance pale and dejected, for the ills of his country evermore preyed upon his heart. Among

the assembled guests was Count Julian, who held a high command in the Moslem army, and was arrayed in garments of mingled Christian and Morisco fashion. Pelistes had been a close and bosom friend of Julian in former times, and had served with him in the wars in Africa, but when the count advanced to accost him with his wonted amity, he turned away in silence and deigned not to notice him; neither, during the whole of the repast, did he address to him ever a word, but treated him as one unknown.

When the banquet was nearly at a close, the discourse turned upon the events of the war, and the Moslem chieftains, in great courtesy, dwelt upon the merits of many of the Christian cavaliers who had fallen in battle, and all extolled the valor of those who had recently perished in the defense of the convent. Pelistes remained silent for a time, and checked the grief which swelled within his bosom as he thought of his devoted cavaliers. At length, lifting up his voice, "Happy are the dead," said he, "for they rest in peace, and are gone to receive the reward of their piety and valor! I could mourn over the loss of my companions in arms, but they have fallen with honor, and are spared the wretchedness I feel in witnessing the thralldom of my country. I have seen my only son, the pride and hope of my age, cut down at my side; I have beheld kindred, friends, and followers falling one by one, around me, and have become so seasoned to those losses that I have ceased to weep. Yet there is one man over whose loss I will never cease to grieve. He was the loved companion of my youth and the steadfast associate of my graver years. He was one of the most loyal of Christian knights. As a friend he was loving and sincere; as a warrior his achievements were above all praise. What has become of him, alas! I know not. If fallen in battle, and I knew where his bones were laid, whether bleaching on the plains of Xeres or buried in the waters of the Guadalete, I would seek them out and enshrine them as the relics of a sainted patriot. Or if, like many of his companions in arms, he should be driven to wander in foreign lands, I would join him in his hapless exile, and we would mourn together over the desolation of our country."

Even the hearts of the Arab warriors were touched by the lament of the good Pelistes, and they said: "Who was this peerless friend in whose praise thou art so fervent?"

"His name," replied Pelistes, "was Count Julian."

The Moslem warriors stared with surprise. "Noble cavalier," exclaimed they, "has grief disordered thy senses? Behold thy friend living and standing before thee, and yet thou dost not know him! This, this is Count Julian!"

Upon this, Pelistes turned his eyes upon the count and regarded him for a time with a lofty and stern demeanor; and the countenance of Julian darkened, and was troubled, and his eye sank beneath the regard of that loyal and honorable cavalier. And Pelistes said, "In the name of God, I charge thee, man unknown! to answer. Dost thou presume to call thyself Count Julian?"

The count reddened with anger at these words. "Pelistes," said he, "what means this mockery? thou knowest me well; thou knowest me for Count Julian."

"I know thee for a base impostor!" cried Pelistes. "Count Julian was a noble Gothic knight; but thou appearest in mongrel Moorish garb. Count Julian was a Christian, faithful and devout; but I behold in thee a renegado and an infidel. Count Julian was ever loyal to his king, and foremost in his country's cause; were he living he would be the first to put shield on neck and lance in rest, to clear the land of her invaders; but thou art a hoary traitor! thy hands are stained with the royal blood of the Goths, and thou hast betrayed thy country and thy God! Therefore, I again repeat, man unknown! if thou sayest thou art Count Julian, thou liest! My friend, alas! is dead; and thou art some fiend from hell, which has taken possession of his body to dishonor his memory and render him an abhorrence among men!" So saying, Pelistes turned his back upon the traitor, and went forth from the banquet, leaving Count Julian overwhelmed with confusion, and an object of scorn to all the Moslem cavaliers.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW TARIK EL TUERTO CAPTURED THE CITY OF TOLEDO THROUGH THE AID OF THE JEWS, AND HOW HE FOUND THE FAMOUS TALISMANIC TABLE OF SOLOMON.

WHILE these events were passing in Cordova, the one-eyed Arab general, Taric el Tuerto, having subdued the city and vega of Granada, and the Mountains of the Sun and Air, directed his march into the interior of the kingdom, to attack the ancient city of Toledo, the capital of the Gothic kings. So great was the terror caused by the rapid conquests of the invaders that at the very rumor of their approach many of the inhabitants, though thus in the very citadel of the kingdom, abandoned it and fled to the mountains with their families. Enough remained, however, to have made a formidable defense; and, as the city was seated on a lofty rock, surrounded by massive walls and towers, and almost girdled by the Tagus, it threatened a long resistance. The Arab warriors pitched their tents in the vega, on the borders of the river, and prepared for a tedious siege.

One evening, as Taric was seated in his tent meditating on the mode in which he should assail this rock-built city, certain of the patrols of the camp brought a stranger before him. "As we were going our rounds," said they, "we beheld this man lowered down with cords from a tower, and he delivered himself into our hands, praying to be conducted to thy presence, that he might reveal to thee certain things important for thee to know."

Taric fixed his eyes upon the stranger: he was a Jewish rabbi, with a long beard which spread upon his gabardine, and descended even to his girdle. "What hast thou to reveal?" said he to the Israelite. "What I have to reveal," replied the other, "is for thee alone to hear; command then, I entreat thee, that these men withdraw." When they were alone he addressed Taric in Arabic: "Know, O leader of the host of Islam," said he, "that I am sent to thee on the part of the children of Israel resident in Toledo. We have been oppressed and insulted by the Christians in the time of their prosperity, and now that they are threatened with siege they have

taken from us all our provisions and our money; they have compelled us to work like slaves, repairing their walls; and they oblige us to bear arms and guard a part of the towers. We abhor their yoke, and are ready, if thou wilt receive us as subjects and permit us the free enjoyment of our religion and our property, to deliver the towers we guard into thy hands, and to give thee safe entrance into the city."

The Arab chief was overjoyed at this proposition, and he rendered much honor to the rabbi, and gave orders to clothe him in a costly robe, and to perfume his beard with essences of a pleasant odor, so that he was the most sweet smelling of his tribe; and he said, "Make thy words good and put me in possession of the city, and I will do all and more than thou hast required, and will bestow countless wealth upon thee and thy brethren."

Then a plan was devised between them by which the city was to be betrayed and given up. "But how shall I be secured," said he, "that all thy tribe will fulfill what thou hast engaged, and that this is not a stratagem to get me and my people into your power?"

"This shall be thy assurance," replied the rabbi: "Ten of the principal Israelites will come to this tent and remain as hostages."

"It is enough," said Taric; and he made oath to accomplish all that he had promised; and the Jewish hostages came and delivered themselves into his hands.

On a dark night a chosen band of Moslem warriors approached the part of the walls guarded by the Jews, and were secretly admitted into a postern gate and concealed within a tower. Three thousand Arabs were at the same time placed in ambush among rocks and thickets, in a place on the opposite side of the river, commanding a view of the city. On the following morning Taric ravaged the gardens of the valley, and set fire to the farmhouses, and then, breaking up his camp, marched off as if abandoning the siege.

The people of Toledo gazed with astonishment from their walls at the retiring squadrons of the enemy, and scarcely could credit their unexpected deliverance; before night there was not a turban nor a hostile lance to be seen in the vega. They attributed it all to the special intervention of their patron saint, Leocadia; and the

following day being palm Sunday, they sallied forth in procession, man, woman, and child, to the church of that blessed saint, which is situated without the walls, that they might return thanks for her marvelous protection.

When all Toledo had thus poured itself forth, and was marching with cross and relic and solemn chant toward the chapel, the Arabs, who had been concealed in the tower, rushed forth and barred the gates of the city. While some guarded the gates, others dispersed themselves about the streets, slaying all who made resistance; and others kindled a fire and made a column of smoke on the top of the citadel. At sight of this signal the Arabs in ambush beyond the river rose with a great shout, and attacked the multitude who were thronging to the church of St. Leocadia. There was a great massacre, although the people were without arms, and made no resistance; and it is said in ancient chronicles that it was the apostate Bishop Oppas who guided the Moslems to their prey, and incited them to this slaughter. The pious reader, says Fray Antonio Agapida, will be slow to believe such turpitude; but there is nothing more venomous than the rancor of an apostate priest; for the best things in this world, when corrupted, become the worst and most baneful.

Many of the Christians had taken refuge within the church and had barred the doors, but Oppas commanded that fire should be set to the portals, threatening to put every one within to the sword. Happily the veteran Taric arrived just in time to stay the fury of this reverend renegado. He ordered the trumpets to call off the troops from the carnage, and extended grace to all the surviving inhabitants. They were permitted to remain in quiet possession of their homes and effects, paying only a moderate tribute; and they were allowed to exercise the rites of their religion in the existing churches, to the number of seven, but were prohibited from erecting any others. Those who preferred to leave the city were suffered to depart in safety, but not to take with them any of their wealth.

Immense spoil was found by Taric in the alcazar or royal castle, situated on a rocky eminence, in the highest part of the city. Among the regalia treasured up in a

secret chamber were twenty-five regal crowns of fine gold garnished with jacinths, amethysts, diamonds, and other precious stones. These were the crowns of the different Gothic kings who had reigned in Spain; it having been the usage, on the death of each king, to deposit his crown in this treasury, inscribing on it his name and age.*

When Taric was thus in possession of the city, the Jews came to him in procession, with songs and dances and the sound of timbrel and psaltery, hailing him as their lord, and reminding him of his promises.

The son of Ishmael kept his word with the children of Israel; they were protected in the possession of all their wealth and the exercise of their religion, and were, moreover, rewarded with jewels of gold and jewels of silver, and much moneys.†

A subsequent expedition was led by Taric against Guadalaxara, which surrendered without resistance; he moreover captured the city of Medina Celi, where he found an inestimable table which had formed a part of the spoil taken at Rome by Alaric, at the time that the sacred city was conquered by the Goths. It was composed of one single and entire emerald, and possessed talismanic powers; for traditions affirm that it was the work of genii, and had been wrought by them for King Solomon the Wise, the son of David. This marvelous relic was carefully preserved by Taric, as the most precious of all his spoils, being intended by him as a present to the caliph; and in commemoration of it the city was called by the Arabs Medina Almeyda; that is to say, "The City of the Table." ‡

Having made these and other conquests of less im-

* Conde, *Hist. de las Arabes en España*, c. 12.

† The stratagem of the Jews of Toledo is recorded briefly by Bishop Lucas de Tuy, in his chronicle, but is related at large in the chronicle of the Moor Rasis.

‡ According to Arabian legends, this table was a mirror revealing all great events; insomuch that by looking on it the possessor might behold battles and sieges and feats of chivalry, and all actions worthy of renown; and might thus ascertain the truth of all historic transactions. It was a mirror of history, therefore; and had very probably aided King Solomon in acquiring that prodigious knowledge and wisdom for which he was renowned.

portance, and having collected great quantities of gold and silver, and rich stuffs and precious stones, Taric returned with his booty to the royal city of Toledo.

CHAPTER VII.

MUZA BEN NOSIER; HIS ENTRANCE INTO SPAIN AND CAPTURE OF CARMONA.

LET us leave for a season the bold Taric in his triumphant progress from city to city, while we turn our eyes to Muza ben Nosier, the renowned Emir of Almagreb, and the commander-in-chief of the Moslem forces of the West. When that jealous chieftain had dispatched his letter commanding Taric to pause and await his coming, he immediately made every preparation to enter Spain with a powerful reënforcement, and to take command of the conquering army. He left his eldest son, Abdalasis, in Caervan, with authority over Almagreb, or Western Africa. This Abdalasis was in the flower of his youth, and beloved by the soldiery for the magnanimity and the engaging affability which graced his courage.

Muza ben Nosier crossed the strait of Hercules with a chosen force of ten thousand horse and eight thousand foot, Arabs and Africans. He was accompanied by his two sons, Meruan and Abdelola, and by numerous illustrious Arabian cavaliers of the tribe of the Koreish. He landed his shining legions on the coast of Andalusia, and pitched his tents near to the Guadiana. There first he received intelligence of the disobedience of Taric to his orders, and that, without waiting his arrival, the impetuous chieftain had continued his career, and with his light Arab squadrons had overrun and subdued the noblest provinces and cities of the kingdom.

The jealous spirit of Muza was still more exasperated by these tidings; he looked upon Taric no longer as a friend and coadjutor, but as an invidious rival, the decided enemy of his glory; and he determined on his ruin. His first consideration, however, was to secure to himself a share in the actual conquest of the land before it should be entirely subjugated.

Taking guides, therefore, from among his Christian

captives, he set out to subdue such parts of the country as had not been visited by Taric. The first place which he assailed was the ancient city of Carmona; it was not of great magnitude, but was fortified with high walls and massive towers, and many of the fugitives of the late army had thrown themselves into it.

The Goths had by this time recovered from their first panic; they had become accustomed to the sight of Moslem troops, and their native courage had been roused by danger. Shortly after the Arabs had encamped before their walls, a band of cavaliers made a sudden sally one morning before the break of day, fell upon the enemy by surprise, killed above three hundred of them in their tents, and effected their retreat into the city; leaving twenty of their number dead, covered with honorable wounds, and in the very center of the camp.

On the following day they made another sally, and fell on a different quarter of the encampment; but the Arabs were on their guard, and met them with superior numbers. After fighting fiercely for a time they were routed, and fled full speed for the city, with the Arabs hard upon their traces. The guards within feared to open the gate, lest with their friends they should admit a torrent of enemies. Seeing themselves thus shut out, the fugitives determined to die like brave soldiers rather than surrender. Wheeling suddenly round, they opened a path through the host of their pursuers, fought their way back to the camp, and raged about it with desperate fury until they were all slain, after having killed above eight hundred of the enemy.*

Muza now ordered that the place should be taken by storm. The Moslems assailed it on all sides, but were vigorously resisted; many were slain by showers of stones, arrows, and boiling pitch, and many who had mounted with scaling ladders were thrown headlong from the battlements. The alcaide, Galo, aided solely by two men, defended a tower and a portion of the wall, killing and wounding with a crossbow more than eighty of the enemy. The attack lasted above half a day, when the Moslems were repulsed with the loss of fifteen hundred men.

* Abulcasim, *Perdida de España*, L. 1, c. 13.

Muza was astonished and exasperated at meeting with such a formidable resistance from so small a city; for it was one of the few places, during that memorable conquest, where the Gothic valor shone forth with its proper luster. While the Moslem army lay encamped before the place it was joined by Magued the renegado, and Count Julian the traitor, with one thousand horsemen; most of them recreant Christians, base betrayers of their country, and more savage in their warfare than the Arabs of the desert. To find favor in the eyes of Muza, and to evince his devotion to the cause, the count undertook, by wily stratagem, to put this gallant city in his power.

One evening, just at twilight, a number of Christians, habited as traveling merchants, arrived at one of the gates, conducting a train of mules laden with arms and warlike munitions. "Open the gate quickly," cried they; "we bring supplies for the garrison, but the Arabs have discovered, and are in pursuit of us." The gate was thrown open, the merchants entered with their beasts of burden, and were joyfully received. Meat and drink were placed before them, and after they had refreshed themselves they retired to the quarters allotted to them.

These pretended merchants were Count Julian and a number of his partisans. At the hour of midnight they stole forth silently, and assembling together, proceeded to what was called the Gate of Cordova. Here, setting suddenly upon the unsuspecting guards, they put them to the edge of the sword, and throwing open the gates, admitted a great body of the Arabs. The inhabitants were roused from their sleep by sound of drum and trumpet and the clattering of horses. The Arabs scoured the streets; a horrible massacre was commenced, in which none were spared but such of the females as were young and beautiful, and fitted to grace the harems of the conquerors. The arrival of Muza put an end to the pillage and the slaughter, and he granted favorable terms to the survivors. Thus the valiant little city of Carmona, after nobly resisting the open assaults of the infidels, fell a victim to the treachery of apostate Christians.*

* Cron. gen. de España, por Alonzo el Sabio. P. 3, c. 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

MUSA MARCHES AGAINST THE CITY OF SEVILLE.

AFTER the capture of Carmona Muza descended into a noble plain, covered with fields of grain, with orchards and gardens, through which glided the soft-flowing Guadalquivir. On the borders of the river stood the ancient city of Seville, surrounded by Roman walls, and defended by its golden tower. Understanding from his spies that the city had lost the flower of its youth in the battle of the Guadalete, Muza anticipated but a faint resistance. A considerable force, however, still remained within the place, and what they wanted in numbers they made up in resolution. For some days they withstood the assaults of the enemy, and defended their walls with great courage. Their want of warlike munitions, however, and the superior force and skill of the besieging army, left them no hope of being able to hold out long. There were two youthful cavaliers of uncommon valor in the city. They assembled the warriors and addressed them. "We cannot save the city," said they; "but at least we may save ourselves, and preserve so many strong arms for the service of our country. Let us cut our way through the infidel force and gain some secure fortress, from whence we may return with augmented numbers for the rescue of the city."

The advice of the young cavaliers was adopted. In the dead of the night the garrison assembled to the number of about three thousand, the most part mounted on horseback. Suddenly sallying from one of the gates, they rushed in a compact body upon the camp of the Saracens, which was negligently guarded, for the Moslems expected no such act of desperation. The camp was a scene of great carnage and confusion; many were slain on both sides; the two valiant leaders of the Christians fell covered with wounds, but the main body succeeded in forcing their way through the center of the army, and in making their retreat to Beja in Lusitania.

Muza was at a loss to know the meaning of this desperate sally. In the morning he perceived the gates of the city wide open. A number of ancient and venerable men presented themselves at his tent, offering submis-

sion and imploring mercy, for none were left in the place but the old, the infirm, and the miserable. Muza listened to them with compassion and granted their prayer, and the only tribute he exacted was three measures of wheat and three of barley from each house or family. He placed a garrison of Arabs in the city, and left there a number of Jews to form a body of population. Having thus secured two important places in Andalusia, he passed the boundaries of the province, and advanced with great martial pomp into Lusitania.

CHAPTER IX.

MUSA BESIEGES THE CITY OF MERIDA.

THE army of Muza was now augmented to about eighteen thousand horsemen, but he took with him but few foot-soldiers, leaving them to garrison the conquered towns. He met with no resistance on his entrance into Lusitania. City after city laid its keys at his feet, and implored to be received into peaceful vassalage. One city alone prepared for vigorous defense, the ancient Merida, a place of great extent, uncounted riches, and prodigious strength. A noble Goth named Sacarus was the governor; a man of consummate wisdom, patriotism, and valor. Hearing of the approach of the invaders, he gathered within the walls all the people of the surrounding country, with their horses and mules, their flocks and herds and most precious effects. To insure for a long time a supply of bread, he filled the magazines with grain, and erected windmills on the churches. This done, he laid waste the surrounding country to a great extent, so that a besieging army would have to encamp in a desert.

When Muza came in sight of this magnificent city he was struck with admiration. He remained for some time gazing in silence upon its mighty walls and lordly towers, its vast extent, and the stately palaces and temples with which it was adorned. "Surely," cried he, at length, "all the people of the earth have combined their power and skill to embellish and aggrandize this city. Allah

Achbar! Happy will he be who shall have the glory of making such a conquest!"

Seeing that a place so populous and so strongly fortified would be likely to maintain a long and formidable resistance, he sent messengers to Africa to his son Abdalasis, to collect all the forces that could be spared from the garrisons of Mauritania, and to hasten and reënforce him.

While Muza was forming his encampment, deserters from the city brought him word that a chosen band intended to sally forth at midnight and surprise his camp. The Arab commander immediately took measures to receive them with a counter surprise. Having formed his plan, and communicated it to his principal officers, he ordered that throughout the day there should be kept up an appearance of negligent confusion in his encampment. The outposts were feebly guarded; fires were lighted in various places, as if preparing for feasting; bursts of music and shouts of revelry resounded from different quarters, and the whole camp seemed to be rioting in careless security on the plunder of the land. As the night advanced the fires were gradually extinguished, and silence ensued, as if the soldiery had sunk into deep sleep after the carousal.

In the meantime, bodies of troops had been secretly and silently marched to reënforce the outposts; and the renegado Magued, with a numerous force, had formed an ambuscade in a deep stone quarry by which the Christians would have to pass. These preparations being made, they awaited the approach of the enemy in breathless silence.

About midnight, the chosen force intended for the sally assembled, and the command was confided to Count Tintero, a Gothic cavalier of tried prowess. After having heard a solemn mass and received the benediction of the priest, they marched out of the gate with all possible silence. They were suffered to pass the ambuscade in the quarry without molestation; as they approached the Moslem camp everything appeared quiet, for the foot soldiers were concealed in slopes and hollows, and every Arab horseman lay in his armor beside his steed. The sentinels on the outposts waited until the Christians were close at hand, and then fled in apparent consternation

Count Tendero gave the signal for assault, and the Christians rushed confidently forward. In an instant an uproar of drums, trumpets, and shrill war cries burst forth from every side. An army seemed to spring up from the earth; squadrons of horse came thundering on them in front, while the quarry poured forth legions of armed warriors in their rear.

The noise of the terrific conflict that took place was heard on the city walls and answered by shouts of exultation, for the Christians thought it rose from the terror and confusion of the Arab camp. In a little while, however, they were undeceived by fugitives from the fight, aghast with terror, and covered with wounds. "Hell itself," cried they, "is on the side of these infidels; the earth casts forth warriors and steeds to aid them. We have fought, not with men, but devils!"

The greater part of the chosen troops who had sallied were cut to pieces in that scene of massacre, for they had been confounded by the tempest of battle which suddenly broke forth around them. Count Tendero fought with desperate valor, and fell covered with wounds. His body was found the next morning, lying among the slain, and transpierced with half a score of lances. The renegade Magued cut off his head and tied it to the tail of his horse, and repaired with this savage trophy to the tent of Muza; but the hostility of the Arab general was of a less malignant kind. He ordered that the head and body should be placed together upon a bier and treated with becoming reverence.

In the course of the day a train of priests and friars came forth from the city to request permission to seek for the body of the count. Muza delivered it to them, with many soldier-like encomiums on the valor of that good cavalier. The priests covered it with a pall of cloth of gold, and bore it back in melancholy procession to the city, where it was received with loud lamentations.

The siege was now pressed with great vigor, and repeated assaults were made, but in vain. Muza saw, at length, that the walls were too high to be scaled, and the gates too strong to be burst open without the aid of engines, and he desisted from the attack until machines for the purpose could be constructed. The governor suspected, from this cessation of active warfare, that the

enemy flattered themselves to reduce the place by famine; he caused, therefore, large baskets of bread to be thrown from the wall, and sent a messenger to Muza to inform him that if his army should be in want of bread, he would supply it, having sufficient corn in his granaries for a ten years' siege."*

The citizens, however, did not possess the undaunted spirit of their governor. When they found that the Moslems were constructing tremendous engines for the destruction of their walls, they lost all courage, and, surrounding the governor in a clamorous multitude, compelled him to send forth persons to capitulate.

The ambassadors came into the presence of Muza with awe, for they expected to find a fierce and formidable warrior in one who had filled the land with terror; but to their astonishment, they beheld an ancient and venerable man, with white hair, a snowy beard, and a pale, emaciated countenance. He had passed the previous night without sleep, and had been all day in the field; he was exhausted, therefore, by watchfulness and fatigue, and his garments were covered with dust.

"What a devil of a man is this," murmured the ambassadors, one to another, "to undertake such a siege when on the verge of the grave. Let us defend our city the best way we can; surely we can hold out longer than the life of this greybeard."

They returned to the city, therefore, scoffing at an invader who seemed fitter to lean on a crutch than wield a lance; and the terms offered by Muza, which would otherwise have been thought favorable, were scornfully rejected by the inhabitants. A few days put an end to this mistaken confidence. Abdalasis, the son of Muza, arrived from Africa at the head of his reënforcement; he brought seven thousand horsemen and a host of Barbary archers, and made a glorious display as he marched into the camp. The arrival of this youthful warrior was hailed with great acclamations, so much had he won the hearts of the soldiery by the frankness, the suavity, and generosity of his conduct. Immediately after his arrival a grand assault was made upon the city, and several of the huge battering engines being finished, they were wheeled up and began to thunder against the walls.

* Bleda, Cronica, L. 2, c. 11.

The unsteady populace were again seized with terror, and, surrounding their governor with fresh clamors, obliged him to send forth ambassaors a second time to treat of a surrender. When admitted to the presence of Muza, the ambassadors could scarcely believe their eyes, or that this was the same withered, white-headed old man of whom they had lately spoken with scoffing. His hair and beard were tinged of a ruddy brown; his countenance was refreshed by repose and flushed with indignation, and he appeared a man in the matured vigor of his days. The ambassadors were struck with awe. "Surely," whispered they, one to the other, "this must be either a devil or a magician, who can thus make himself old and young at pleasure."

Muza received them haughtily. "Hence," said he, "and tell your people I grant them the same terms I have already proffered, provided the city be instantly surrendered; but, by the head of Mohammed, if there be any further delay, not one mother's son of ye shall receive mercy at my hands!"

The deputies returned into the city pale and dismayed. "Go forth! go forth!" cried they, "and accept whatever terms are offered; of what avail is it to fight against men who can renew their youth at pleasure? Behold, we left the leader of the infidels an old and feeble man, and to-day we find him youthful and vigorous."*

The place was, therefore, surrendered forthwith, and Muza entered it in triumph. His terms were merciful. Those who chose to remain were protected in persons, possessions, and religion; he took the property of those only who abandoned the city or had fallen in battle, together with all arms and horses, and the treasures and ornaments of the churches. Among these sacred spoils was found a cup made of a single pearl, which a king of Spain, in ancient times, had brought from the temple of Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Nabuchodonosor. This precious relic was sent by Muza to the caliph, and was placed in the principal mosque of the city of Damascus.†

* Conde, p. 1, c. 13. Ambrosio de Morales. N. B.—In the chronicle of Spain, composed by order of Alonzo the Wise, this anecdote is given as having happened at the siege of Seville.

† Marmol. *Descrip. de Africa*, T. 1, L. 2.

Muza knew how to esteem merit even in an enemy. When Sacarus, the governor of Merida, appeared before him, he lauded him greatly for the skill and courage he had displayed in the defense of his city; and, taking off his own scimitar, which was of great value, girded it upon him with his own hands. "Wear this," said he, "as a poor memorial of my admiration; a soldier of such virtue and valor is worthy of far higher honors."

He would have engaged the governor in his service, or have persuaded him to remain in the city, as an illustrious vassal of the caliph, but the noble-minded Sacarus refused to bend to the yoke of the conquerors; nor could he bring himself to reside contentedly in his country, when subjected to the domination of the infidels. Gathering together all those who chose to accompany him into exile, he embarked to seek some country where he might live in peace and in the free exercise of his religion. What shore these ocean pilgrims landed upon has never been revealed; but tradition vaguely gives us to believe that it was some unknown island far in the bosom of the Atlantic.*

CHAPTER X.

EXPEDITION OF ABDALASIS AGAINST SEVILLE AND THE "LAND OF TADMIR."

AFTER the capture of Merida, Muza gave a grand banquet to his captains and distinguished warriors in that magnificent city. At this martial feast were many Arab cavaliers who had been present in various battles, and they vied with each other in recounting the daring enterprises in which they had been engaged, and the splendid triumphs they had witnessed. While they talked with ardor and exultation, Abdalasis, the son of Muza, alone kept silence, and sat with a dejected countenance. At length, when there was a pause, he turned to his father and addressed him with modest earnestness. "My lord and father," said he, "I blush to hear your warriors recount the toils and dangers they have passed,

* Abulcasim, *Perdida de España*, L. 1, c. 13.

while I have done nothing to entitle me to their companionship. When I return to Egypt and present myself before the caliph he will ask me of my services in Spain; what battle I have gained; what town or castle I have taken. How shall I answer him? If you love me, then, as your son, give me a command, intrust to me an enterprise, and let me acquire a name worthy to be mentioned among men."

The eyes of Muza kindled with joy at finding Adbalasis thus ambitious of renown in arms. "Allah be praised!" exclaimed he, "the heart of my son is in the right place. It is becoming in youth to look upward and be aspiring. Thy desire, Abdalasis, shall be gratified."

An opportunity at that very time presented itself to prove the prowess and discretion of the youth. During the siege of Merida the Christian troops which had taken refuge at Beja had reënforced themselves from Peñaflor, and suddenly returning, had presented themselves before the gates of the city of Seville.* Certain of the Christian inhabitants threw open the gates and admitted them. The troops rushed to the alcazar, took it by surprise, and put many of the Moslem garrison to the sword; the residue made their escape, and fled to the Arab camp before Merida, leaving Seville in the hands of the Christians.

The veteran Muza, now that the siege of Merida was at an end, was meditating the recapture and punishment of Seville at the very time when Abdalasis addressed him. "Behold, my son," exclaimed he, "an enterprise worthy of thy ambition! Take with thee all the troops thou hast brought from Africa; reduce the city of Seville again to subjection, and plant thy standard upon its alcazar. But stop not there: carry thy conquering sword into the southern parts of Spain; thou wilt find there a harvest of glory yet to be reaped."

Abdalasis lost no time in departing upon this enterprise. He took with him Count Julian, Magued el Rumi, and the Bishop Oppas, that he might benefit by their knowledge of the country. When he came in sight of the fair city of Seville, seated like a queen in the midst of its golden plain, with the Guadalquivir flowing be-

* Espinosa, Antq. y Grand. de Seville, L. 2, c. 3.

neath its walls, he gazed upon it with the admiration of a lover, and lamented in his soul that he had to visit it as an avenger. His troops, however, regarded it with wrathful eyes, thinking only of its rebellion, and of the massacre of their countrymen in the alcazar.

The principal people in the city had taken no part in this gallant but fruitless insurrection; and now, when they beheld the army of Abdalasis encamped upon the banks of the Guadalquivir, would fain have gone forth to make explanations and intercede for mercy. The populace, however, forbade any one to leave the city and, barring the gates, prepared to defend themselves to the last.

The place was attacked with resistless fury. The gates were soon burst open; the Moslems rushed in, panting for revenge. They confined not their slaughter to the soldiery in the alcazar, but roamed through every street, confounding the innocent with the guilty in one bloody massacre, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Abdalasis could at length succeed in staying their sanguinary career.*

The son of Muza proved himself as mild in conquest as he had been intrepid in assault. The moderation and benignity of his conduct soothed the terrors of the vanquished, and his wise precautions restored tranquillity. Having made proper regulations for the protection of the inhabitants, he left a strong garrison in the place to prevent any future insurrection, and then departed on the further prosecution of his enterprise.

Wherever he went his arms were victorious; and his victories were always characterized by the same magnanimity. At length he arrived on the confines of that beautiful region comprising lofty and precipitous mountains and rich and delicious plains, afterward known by the name of the kingdom of Murcia. All this part of the country was defended by the veteran Theodomir, who, by skillful management, had saved a remnant of his forces after the defeat on the banks of the Guadalete.

Theodomir was a stanch warrior, but a wary and prudent man. He had experienced the folly of opposing the Arabs in open field, where their cavalry and armor

* Conde, P. 1, c. 14.

gave them such superiority; on their approach, therefore, he assembled all his people capable of bearing arms, and took possession of the cliffs and mountain passes. "Here," said he, "a simple goatherd, who can hurl down rocks and stones, is as good as a warrior armed in proof." In this way he checked and harassed the Moslem army in all its movements, showering down missiles upon it from overhanging precipices, and waylaying it in narrow and rugged defiles, where a few raw troops could make stand against a host.

Theodimir was in a fair way to baffle his foes and obliged them to withdraw from his territories; unfortunately, however, the wary veteran had two sons with him, young men of hot and heavy valor, who considered all this prudence of their father as savoring of cowardice, and who were anxious to try their prowess in the open field. "What glory," said they, "is to be gained by destroying an enemy in this way, from the covert of rocks and thickets?"

"You talk like young men," replied the veteran. "Glory is a prize one may fight for abroad, but safety is the object when the enemy is at the door."

One day, however, the young men succeeded in drawing down their father into the plain. Abdalasis immediately seized on the opportunity and threw himself between the Goths and their mountain fastnesses. Theodimir saw too late the danger into which he was betrayed. "What can our raw troops do," said he, "against those squadrons of horse that move like castles? Let us make a rapid retreat to Orihuela and defend ourselves from behind its walls."

"Father," said the eldest son, "it is too late to retreat; remain here with the reserve while my brother and I advance. Fear nothing; am not I your son, and would I not die to defend you?"

"In truth," replied the veteran, "I have my doubts whether you are my son. But if I remain here, and you should all be killed, where then would be my protection? Come," added he, turning to the second son, "I trust that thou art virtually my son; let us hasten to retreat before it is too late."

"Father," replied the youngest, "I have not a doubt that I am honestly and thoroughly your son, and as such

I honor you; but I owe duty likewise to my mother, and when I sallied to the war she gave me her blessing as long as I should act with valor, but her curse should I prove craven and fly the field. Fear nothing, father; I will defend you while living, and even after you are dead. you shall never fail of an honorable sepulture among your kindred."

"A pestilence on ye both," cried Theodomir, "for a brace of misbegotten madmen! What care I, think ye, where ye lay my body when I am dead? One day's existence in a hovel is worth an age of interment in a marble sepulcher. Come, my friends," said he, turning to his principal cavaliers, "let us leave these hot-headed striplings and make our retreat; if we tarry any longer the enemy will be upon us."

Upon this the cavaliers and proud hidalgos drew up scornfully and tossed their heads: "What do you see in us," said they, "that you think we will show our backs to the enemy? Forward! was ever the good old Gothic watchword, and with that we will live and die!"

While time was lost in these disputes, the Moslem army kept advancing, until retreat was no longer practicable. The battle was tumultuous and bloody. Theodomir fought like a lion, but it was all in vain; he saw his two sons cut down, and the greater part of their rash companions, while his raw mountain troops fled in all directions.

Seeing there was no longer any hope, he seized the bridle of a favorite page who was near him, and who was about spurring for the mountains. "Part not from me," said he, "but do thou at least attend to my counsel, my son; and, of a truth, I believe thou art my son; for thou art the offspring of one of my handmaids who was kind unto me." And indeed the youth marvelously resembled him. Turning then the reins of his own steed, and giving him the spur, he fled amain from the field, followed by the page; nor did he stop until he arrived within the walls of Orihuela.

Ordering the gates to be barred and bolted, he prepared to receive the enemy. There were but few men in the city capable of bearing arms, most of the youth having fallen in the field. He caused the women, therefore, to clothe themselves in male attire, to put on hats and

helmets, to take long reeds in their hands instead of lances, and to cross their hair upon their chins in semblance of beards. With these troops he lined the walls and towers.

It was about the hour of twilight that Abdalasis approached with his army, but he paused when he saw the walls so numerous garrisoned. Then Theodomir took a flag of truce in his hand, and put a herald's tabard on the page, and they two sallied forth to capitulate, and were graciously received by Abdalasis.

"I come," said Theodomir, "on the behalf of the commander of this city to treat for terms worthy of your magnanimity and of his dignity. You perceive that the city is capable of withstanding a long siege, but he is desirous of sparing the lives of his soldiers. Promise that the inhabitants shall be at liberty to depart unmolested with their property, and the city will be delivered up to you to-morrow morning without a blow; otherwise we are prepared to fight until not a man be left."

Abdalasis was well pleased to get so powerful a place upon such easy terms, but stipulated that the garrison should lay down their arms. To this Theodomir readily assented, with the exception, however, of the governor and his retinue, which was granted out of consideration for his dignity. The articles of capitulation were then drawn out, and when Abdalasis had affixed his name and seal, Theodomir took the pen and wrote his signature. "Behold in me," said he, "the governor of the city!"

Abdalasis was pleased with the hardihood of the commander of the place in thus venturing personally into his power, and entertained the veteran with still greater honor. When Theodomir returned to the city he made known the capitulation, and charged the inhabitants to pack up their effects during the night and be ready to sally forth in the morning.

At the dawn of day the gates were thrown open, and Abdalasis looked to see a great force issuing forth, but to his surprise, beheld merely Theodomir and his page in battered armor, followed by a multitude of old men, women, and children.

Abdalasis waited until the whole had come forth, then turning to Theodomir, "Where," cried he, "are the soldiers whom I saw last evening lining the walls and towers?"

“Soldiers have I none,” replied the veteran. “As to my garrison, behold it before you. With these women did I man my walls, and this my page is my herald, guard and retinue.”

Upon this the Bishop Oppas and Count Julian exclaimed that the capitulation was a base fraud and ought not to be complied with; but Abdalasis relished the stratagem of the old soldier, and ordered that the stipulations of the treaty should be faithfully performed. Nay, so high an opinion did he conceive of the subtle wisdom of this commander, that he permitted him to remain in authority over the surrounding country on his acknowledging allegiance and engaging to pay tribute to the caliph; and all that part of Spain, comprising the beautiful provinces of Murcia and Valencia, was long after known by the Arabic name of its defender, and is still recorded in Arabian chronicles as “The land of Tadmir.”*

Having succeeded in subduing this rich and fruitful region, and having gained great renown for his generosity as well as valor, Abdalasis returned with the chief part of his army to the city of Seville.

CHAPTER XI.

MUZA ARRIVES AT TOLEDO—INTERVIEW BETWEEN HIM AND TARIQ.

WHEN Muza ben Nosier had sent his son Abdalasis to subdue Seville, he departed for Toledo to call Tariq to account for his disobedience to his orders; for, amid all his own successes, the prosperous career of that commander preyed upon his mind. What can content the jealous and ambitious heart? As Muza passed through the land, towns and cities submitted to him without resistance; he was lost in wonder at the richness of the country and noble monuments of art with which it was adorned; when he beheld the bridges constructed in ancient times by the Romans, they seemed to him the

* Conde, p. 1. Cronica del Moro Rasis. Cron. gen. España, por Alonzo el Sabio, p. 3, c. 1.

work, not of men, but of genii. Yet all these admirable objects only made him repine the more that he had not had the exclusive glory of invading and subduing the land; and exasperating him the more against Taric, for having apparently endeavored to monopolize the conquest.

Taric heard of his approach, and came forth to meet him at Talavera, accompanied by many of the most distinguished companions of his victories, and with a train of horses and mules laden with spoils, with which he trusted to propitiate the favor of his commander. Their meeting took place on the banks of the rapid river Tietar, which rises in the mountains of Placencia and throws itself into the Tagus. Muza, in former days, while Taric had acted as his subordinate and indefatigable officer, had cherished and considered him as a second self; but now that he had started up to be a rival, he could not conceal his jealousy. When the veteran came into his presence he regarded him for a moment with a stern and indignant aspect. "Why hast thou disobeyed my orders?" said he. "I commanded thee to await my arrival with reënforcements, but thou hast rashly overrun the country, endangering the loss of our armies and the ruin of our cause."

"I have acted," replied Taric, "in such manner as I thought would best serve the cause of Islam, and in so doing I thought to fulfill the wishes of Muza. Whatever I have done has been as your servant; behold your share, as commander-in-chief, of the spoils which I have collected." So saying, he produced an immense treasure in silver and gold and costly stuffs, and precious stones, and spread it before Muza.

The anger of the Arab commander was still more kindled at the sight of this booty, for it proved how splendid had been the victories of Taric; but he restrained his wrath for the present, and they proceeded together in moody silence to Toledo. When he entered this royal city, however, and ascended to the ancient palace of the Gothic kings, and reflected that all this had been a scene of triumph to his rival, he could no longer repress his indignation. He demanded of Taric a strict account of all the riches he had gathered in Spain, even of the presents he had reserved for the caliph, and, above all, he made him yield up his favorite trophy, the

talismanic table of Solomon. When all this was done he again upbraided him bitterly with his disobedience of orders, and with the rashness of his conduct. "What blind confidence in fortune hast thou shown," said he, "in overrunning such a country, and assailing such powerful cities with thy scanty force! What madness, to venture everything upon a desperate chance, when thou knewest I was coming with a force to make the victory secure. All thy success has been owing to mere luck, not to judgment nor generalship."

He then bestowed high praises upon the other chieftains for their services in the cause of Islam, but they answered not a word and their countenances were gloomy and discontented; for they felt the injustice done to their favorite leader. As to Taric, though his eye burned like fire, he kept his passion within bounds. "I have done the best I could to serve God and the caliph," said he emphatically; "my conscience acquits me, and I trust my sovereign will do the same."

"Perhaps he may," replied Muza bitterly; "but, in the meantime, I cannot confide his interests to a desperado who is heedless of orders and throws everything at hazard. Such a general is unworthy to be intrusted with the fate of armies."

So saying, he divested Taric of his command, and gave it to Magued the renegado. The gaunt Taric still maintained an air of stern composure. His only words were, "The caliph will do me justice!" Muza was so transported with passion at this laconic defiance that he ordered him to be thrown into prison, and even threatened his life.

Upon this, Magued el Rumi, though he had risen by the disgrace of Taric, had the generosity to speak out warmly in his favor. "Consider," said he to Muza, "what may be the consequences of this severity. Taric has many friends in the army; his actions, too, have been signal and illustrious, and entitle him to the highest honors and rewards, instead of disgrace and imprisonment."

The anger of Muza, however, was not to be appeased; and he trusted to justify his measures by dispatching missives to the caliph, complaining of the insubordination of Taric, and his rash and headlong conduct. The

result proved the wisdom of the caution given by Magued. In the course of a little while Muza received a humiliating letter from the caliph, ordering him to restore Taric to the command of the soldiers, "whom he had so gloriously conducted;" and not to render useless "one of the best swords in Islam!" *

It is thus the envious man brings humiliation and reproach upon himself, in endeavoring to degrade a meritorious rival. When the tidings came of the justice rendered by the caliph to the merits of the veteran, there was general joy throughout the army, and Muza read in the smiling countenances of every one around him a severe censure upon his conduct. He concealed, however, his deep humiliation, and affected to obey the orders of his sovereign with great alacrity; he released Taric from prison, feasted him at his own table, and then publicly replaced him at the head of his troops. The army received its favorite veteran with shouts of joy, and celebrated with rejoicings the reconciliation of the commanders; but the shouts of the soldiery were abhorrent to the ears of Muza.

CHAPTER XII.

MUZA PROSECUTES THE SCHEME OF CONQUEST—SIEGE OF SARAGOSSA—COMPLETE SUBJUGATION OF SPAIN.

THE dissensions which for a time had distracted the conquering army being appeased, and the Arabian generals being apparently once more reconciled, Muza, as commander-in-chief, proceeded to complete the enterprise by subjugating the northern parts of Spain. The same expeditious mode of conquest that had been sagaciously adopted by Taric was still pursued. The troops were lightly armed and freed from every superfluous incumbrance. Each horseman, beside his arms, carried a small sack of provisions, a copper vessel in which to cook them, and a skin which served him for surcoat and for bed. The infantry carried nothing but their arms. To each regiment or squadron was allowed a

* Conde, Part 1, c. 15.

limited number of sumpter mules and attendants, barely enough to carry their necessary baggage and supplies; nothing was permitted that could needlessly diminish the number of fighting men, delay their rapid movements, or consume their provisions. Strict orders were again issued, prohibiting, on pain of death, all plunder excepting the camp of an enemy, or cities given up to pillage.*

The armies now took their several lines of march. That under Taric departed toward the northeast; beating up the country toward the source of the Tagus; traversing the chain of the Iberian or Arragonian mountains, and pouring down into the plains and valleys watered by the Ebro. It was wonderful to see, in so brief a space of time, such a vast and difficult country penetrated and subdued, and the invading army, like an inundating flood, pouring its streams into the most remote recesses.

While Taric was thus sweeping the country to the northeast, Muza departed in an opposite direction; yet purposing to meet him, and join their forces in the north. Bending his course westwardly, he made a circuit behind the mountains, and then, advancing into the open country, displayed his banners before Salamanca, which surrendered without resistance. From hence he continued on toward Astorga, receiving the terrified submission of the land; then turning up the valley of the Douro, he ascended the course of that famous river toward the east; crossed the Sierra de Moncayo, and arriving on the banks of the Ebro, marched down along its stream, until he approached the strong city of Saragossa, the citadel of all that part of Spain. In this place had taken refuge many of the most valiant of the Gothic warriors—the remnants of armies, and fugitives from conquered cities. It was one of the last rallying points of the land. When Muza arrived Taric had already been for some time before the place, laying close siege; the inhabitants were pressed by famine, and had suffered great losses in repeated combats, but there was a spirit and obstinacy in their resistance surpassing anything that had yet been witnessed by the invaders.

Muza now took command of the siege, and ordered a

* Conde, p. 1, c. 15.

general assault upon the walls. The Moslems planted their scaling ladders, and mounted with their accustomed intrepidity, but were vigorously resisted; nor could all their efforts obtain them a footing upon the battlements. While they were thus assailing the walls, Count Julian ordered a heap of combustibles to be placed against one of the gates and set on fire. The inhabitants attempted in vain from the barbican to extinguish the flames. They burned so fiercely that in a little while the gate fell from its hinges. Count Julian galloped into the city, mounted upon a powerful charger, himself and his steed all covered with mail. He was followed by three hundred of his partisans, and supported by Magued the renegade, with a troop of horse.

The inhabitants disputed every street and public square; they made barriers of dead bodies, fighting behind these ramparts of their slaughtered countrymen. Every window and roof was filled with combatants; the very women and children joined in the desperate fight, throwing down stones and missiles of all kinds, and scalding water upon the enemy.

The battle raged until the hour of vespers, when the principal inhabitants held a parley and capitulated for a surrender. Muza had been incensed at their obstinate resistance, which had cost the lives of so many of his soldiers; he knew, also, that in the city were collected the riches of many of the towns of Eastern Spain. He demanded, therefore, besides the usual terms, a heavy sum to be paid down by the citizens, called the contribution of blood, as by this they redeemed themselves from the edge of the sword. The people were obliged to comply. They collected all the jewels of their richest families, and all the ornaments of their temples, and laid them at the feet of Muza; and placed in his power many of their noblest youths as hostages. A strong garrison was then appointed, and thus the fierce city of Saragossa was subdued to the yoke of the conqueror.

The Arab generals pursued their conquests even to the foot of the Pyrenees; Taric then descended along the course of the Ebro, and continued along the Mediterranean coast; subduing the famous city of Valencia, with its rich and beautiful domains, and carrying the success of his arms even to Denia.

Muza undertook with his host a wider range of conquest. He overcame the cities of Barcelona, Gerona, and others that lay on the skirts of the eastern mountains; then crossing into the land of the Franks, he captured the city of Narbonne, in a temple of which he found seven equestrian images of silver, which he brought off as trophies of his victory.* Returning into Spain, he scoured its northern regions along Galicia and the Asturias; passed triumphantly through Lusitania, and arrived once more in Andalusia, covered with laurels and enriched with immense spoils.

Thus was completed the subjugation of unhappy Spain. All its cities, and fortresses, and strongholds were in the hands of the Saracens, excepting some of the wild mountain tracts that bordered the Atlantic, and extended toward the north. Here, then, the story of the conquest might conclude, but that the indefatigable chronicler, Fray Antonio Agapida, goes on to record the fate of those persons who were most renowned in the enterprise. We shall follow his steps, and avail ourselves of his information, laboriously collected from various sources; and, truly, the story of each of the actors in this great historical drama bears with it its striking moral, and is full of admonition and instruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

FEUD BETWEEN THE ARAB GENERALS—THEY ARE SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE CALIPH AT DAMASCUS—RECEPTION OF TARIQ.

THE heart of Muza ben Nosier was now lifted up, for he considered his glory complete. He held a sway that might have gratified the ambition of the proudest sovereign, for all Western Africa and the newly acquired peninsula of Spain were obedient to his rule; and he was renowned throughout all the lands of Islam as the great conqueror of the West. But sudden humiliation awaited him in the very moment of his highest triumph.

Notwithstanding the outward reconciliation of Muza

* Conde, p. 1, c. 16.

and Taric, a deep and implacable hostility continued to exist between them; and each had busy partisans who distracted the armies by their feuds. Letters were incessantly dispatched to Damascus by either party, exalting the merits of their own leader and decrying his rival. Taric was represented as rash, arbitrary, and prodigal, and as injuring the discipline of the army, by sometimes treating it with extreme rigor and at other times giving way to licentiousness and confusion. Muza was lauded as prudent, sagacious, dignified, and systematic in his dealings. The friends of Taric, on the other hand, represented him as brave, generous, and high-minded; scrupulous in reserving to his sovereign his rightful share of the spoils, but distributing the rest bounteously among his soldiers, and thus increasing their alacrity in the service. "Muza, on the contrary," said they, "is grasping and insatiable; he levies intolerable contributions, and collects immense treasure, but sweeps it all into his own coffers."

The caliph was at length wearied out by these complaints, and feared that the safety of the cause might be endangered by the dissensions of the rival generals. He sent letters, therefore, ordering them to leave suitable persons in charge of their several commands, and appear, forthwith, before him at Damascus.

Such was the greeting from his sovereign that awaited Muza on his return from the conquest of Northern Spain. It was a grievous blow to a man of his pride and ambition; but he prepared instantly to obey. He returned to Cordova, collecting by the way all the treasures he had deposited in various places. At that city he called a meeting of his principal officers, and of the leaders of the faction of apostate Christians, and made them all do homage to his son Abdalasis, as emir or governor of Spain. He gave this favorite son much sage advice for the regulation of his conduct, and left with him his nephew, Ayub, a man greatly honored by the Moslems for his wisdom and discretion; exhorting Abdalasis to consult him on all occasions and consider him as his bosom counselor. He made a parting address to his adherents, full of cheerful confidence; assuring them that he would soon return, loaded with new favors and honors by his sovereign, and enabled to reward them all for their faithful services.

When Muza sallied forth from Cordova, to repair to Damascus, his cavalgada appeared like the sumptuous pageant of some Oriental potentate; for he had numerous guards and attendants splendidly armed and arrayed, together with four hundred hostages, who were youthful cavaliers of the noblest families of the Goths, and a great number of captives of both sexes, chosen for their beauty, and intended as presents for the caliph. Then there was a vast train of beasts of burden, laden with the plunder of Spain; for he took with him all the wealth he had collected in his conquests, and all the share that had been set apart for his sovereign. With this display of trophies and spoils, showing the magnificence of the land he had conquered, he looked with confidence to silence the calumnies of his foes.

As he traversed the valley of the Guadalquivir he often turned and looked back wistfully upon Cordova; and, at the distance of a league, when about to lose sight of it, he checked his steed upon the summit of a hill, and gazed for a long time upon its palaces and towers. "O Cordova!" exclaimed he, "great and glorious art thou among cities, and abundant in all delights. With grief and sorrow do I part from thee, for sure I am it will give me length of days to abide within thy pleasant walls!" When he had uttered these words, say the Arabian chronicles, he resumed his wayfaring; but his eyes were bent upon the ground, and frequent sighs bespoke the heaviness of his heart.

Embarking at Cadiz he passed over to Africa with all his people and effects, to regulate his government in that country. He divided the command between his sons, Abdelola and Meruan, leaving the former in Tangier, and the latter in Caervan. Thus having secured, as he thought, the power and prosperity of his family, by placing all his sons as his lieutenants in the country he had conquered, he departed for Syria, bearing with him the sumptuous spoils of the West.

While Muza was thus disposing of his commands, and moving cumbrously under the weight of wealth, the veteran Taric was more speedy and alert in obeying the summons of the caliph. He knew the importance, where complaints were to be heard, of being first in presence of the judge; besides, he was ever ready to march at a

moment's warning, and had nothing to impede him in his movements. The spoils he had made in his conquests had either been shared among his soldiers, or yielded up to Muza, or squandered away with open-handed profusion. He appeared in Syria with a small train of war-worn followers, and had no other trophies to show than his battered armor, and a body seamed with scars. He was received, however, with rapture by the multitude, who crowded to behold one of those conquerors of the West, whose wonderful achievements were the theme of every tongue. They were charmed with his gaunt and martial air, his hard sunburnt features, and his scathed eye. "All hail," cried they, "to the sword of Islam, the terror of the unbelievers! Behold the true model warrior, who despises gain and seeks for naught but glory!"

Taric was graciously received by the caliph, who asked tidings of his victories. He gave a soldier-like account of his actions, frank and full, without any feigned modesty, yet without vainglory. "Commander of the faithful," said he, "I bring thee no silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor captives, for what spoils I did not share with my soldiers I gave up to Muza as my commander. How I have conducted myself the honorable warriors of thy host will tell thee; nay, let our enemies, the Christians, be asked if I have ever shown myself cowardly, or cruel, or rapacious."

"What kind of people are these Christians?" demanded the caliph.

"The Spaniards," replied Taric, "are lions in their castles, eagles in their saddles, but mere women when on foot. When vanquished they escape like goats to the mountains, for they need not see the ground they tread on."

"And tell me of the Moors of Barbary."

"They are like Arabs in the fierceness and dexterity of their attacks, and in their knowledge of the stratagems of war; they resemble them, too, in feature, in fortitude, and hospitality; but they are the most perfidious people upon earth, and never regard promise or plighted faith."

"And the people of Afranc; what sayest thou of them?"

"They are infinite in number; rapid in the onset, fierce in battle, but confused and headlong in flight."

“And how fared it with thee among these people? Did they sometimes vanquish thee?”

“Never, by Allah!” cried Taric, with honest warmth; “never did a banner of mine fly the field. Though the enemy were two to one, my Moslems never shunned the combat!”

The caliph was well pleased with the martial bluntness of the veteran, and showed him great honor; and wherever Taric appeared he was the idol of the populace.

CHAPTER XIV.

MUZA ARRIVES AT DAMASCUS—HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE CALIPH—THE TABLE OF SOLOMON—A RIGOROUS SENTENCE.

SHORTLY after the arrival of Taric el Tuerto at Damascus, the caliph fell dangerously ill, insomuch that his life was despaired of. During his illness tidings were brought that Muza ben Nosier had entered Syria with a vast cavalcade, bearing all the riches and trophies gained in the Western conquests. Now Suleiman ben Abdelmelec, brother to the caliph, was successor to the throne, and he saw that his brother had not long to live, and wished to grace the commencement of his reign by this triumphant display of the spoils of Christendom; he sent messengers, therefore, to Muza, saying, “The caliph is ill and cannot receive thee at present; I pray thee tarry on the road until his recovery.” Muza, however, paid no attention to the messages of Suleiman, but rather hastened his march to arrive before the death of the caliph. And Suleiman treasured up his conduct in his heart.

Muza entered the city in a kind of triumph, with a long train of horses and mules and camels laden with treasure, and with the four hundred sons of Gothic nobles as hostages, each decorated with a diadem and a girdle of gold; and with one hundred Christian damsels, whose beauty dazzled all beholders. As he passed through the streets he ordered purses of gold to be thrown among the populace, who rent the air with acclamations. “Behold,” cried they, “the veritable conqueror of the unbelievers! Behold the true model of a

conqueror, who brings home wealth to his country!" And they heaped benedictions on the head of Muza.

The Caliph Waled Almanzor rose from his couch of illness to receive the emir, who, when he repaired to the palace, filled one of its great courts with treasures of all kinds; the halls, too, were thronged with the youthful hostages, magnificently attired, and with Christian damsels, lovely as the houris of paradise. When the caliph demanded an account of the conquest of Spain, he gave it with great eloquence; but, in describing the various victories, he made no mention of the name of Taric, but spoke as if everything had been effected by himself. He then presented the spoils of the Christians as if they had been all taken by his own hands; and when he delivered to the caliph the miraculous table of Solomon he dwelt with animation on the virtues of that inestimable talisman.

Upon this, Taric, who was present, could no longer hold his peace. "Commander of the faithful," said he, "examine this precious table, if any part be wanting." The caliph examined the table, which was composed of a single emerald, and he found that one foot was supplied with a foot of gold. The caliph turned to Muza and said, "Where is the other foot of the table?" Muza answered, "I know not; one foot was wanting when it came into my hands." Upon this Taric drew from beneath his robe a foot of emerald of like workmanship to the others, and fitting exactly to the table. "Behold, O commander of the faithful!" cried he, "a proof of the real finder of the table; and so is it with the greater part of the spoils exhibited by Muza as trophies of his achievements. It was I who gained them, and who captured the cities in which they were found. If you want proof, demand of these Christian cavaliers here present, most of whom I captured; demand of those Moslem warriors who aided me in my battles."

Muza was confounded for a moment, but attempted to vindicate himself. "I spake," said he, "as the chief of your armies, under whose orders and banners this conquest was achieved. The actions of the soldier are the actions of the commander. In a great victory it is not supposed that the chief of the army takes all the captives, or kills all the slain, or gathers all the booty, though all

are enumerated in the records of his triumph." The caliph, however, was wroth, and heeded not his words. "You have vaunted your own deserts," said he, "and have forgotten the deserts of others; nay, you have sought to debase another who has loyally served his sovereign; the reward of your envy and covetousness be upon your own head!" So saying, he bestowed a great part of the spoils upon Taric and the other chiefs, but gave nothing to Muza, and the veteran retired amid the sneers and murmurs of those present.

In a few days the Caliph Waled died, and was succeeded by his brother Suleiman. The new sovereign cherished deep resentment against Muza for having presented himself at court contrary to his command, and he listened readily to the calumnies of his enemies; for Muza had been too illustrious in his deeds not to have many enemies. All now took courage when they found he was out of favor, and they heaped slanders on his head; charging him with embezzling much of the share of the booty belonging to the sovereign. The new caliph lent a willing ear to the accusation, and commanded him to render up all that he had pillaged from Spain. The loss of his riches might have been borne with fortitude by Muza, but the stigma upon his fame filled his heart with bitterness. "I have been a faithful servant to the throne from my youth upward," said he, "and now I am degraded in my old age. I care not for wealth, I care not for life, but let me not be deprived of that honor which God has bestowed upon me!"

The caliph was still more exasperated at his repining, and stripped him of his commands; confiscated his effects; fined him two hundred thousand pesants of gold, and ordered that he should be scourged and exposed to the noontide sun, and afterward thrown into prison.* The populace also reviled and scoffed at him in his misery, and as they beheld him led forth to the public gaze, and fainting in the sun, they pointed at him with derision and exclaimed: "Behold the envious man and the impostor; this is he who pretended to have conquered the land of the unbelievers!"

* Conde, p. 1, c. 17.

CHAPTER XV.

CONDUCT OF ABDALASIS AS EMIR OF SPAIN.

WHILE these events were happening in Syria, the youthful Abdalasis, the son of Muza, remained as emir or governor of Spain. He was of a generous and benignant disposition, but he was open and confiding, and easily led away by the opinions of those he loved. Fortunately his father had left with him, as a bosom counselor, the discreet Ayub, the nephew of Muza; aided by his advice, he for some time administered the public affairs prudently and prosperously.

Not long after the departure of his father, he received a letter from him, written while on his journey to Syria; it was to the following purport:

“Beloved son, honor of thy lineage, Allah guard thee from all harm and peril! Listen to the words of thy father. Avoid all treachery, though it should promise great advantage, and trust not in him who counsels it, even though he should be a brother. The company of traitors put far from thee; for how canst thou be certain that he who has proved false to others will prove true to thee? Beware, O my son, of the seductions of love. It is an idle passion which enfeebles the heart and blinds the judgment; it renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes. If thou shouldst discover any foible of a vicious kind springing up in thy nature, pluck it forth, whatever pang it cost thee. Every error, while new, may easily be weeded out, but if suffered to take root, it flourishes and bears seed, and produces fruit an hundred-fold. Follow these counsels, O son of my affections, and thou shalt live secure.”

Abdalasis meditated upon this letter, for some part of it seemed to contain a mystery which he could not comprehend. He called to him his cousin and counselor, the discreet Ayub. “What means my father,” said he, “in cautioning me against treachery and treason? Does he think my nature so base that it could descend to such means?”

Ayub read the letter attentively. “Thy father,” said

he, "would put thee on thy guard against the traitors Julian and Oppas, and those of their party who surround thee. What love canst thou expect from men who have been unnatural to their kindred, and what loyalty from wretches who have betrayed their country?"

Abdalasis was satisfied with the interpretation, and he acted accordingly. He had long loathed all communion with these men, for there is nothing which the open, ingenuous nature so much abhors as duplicity and treason. Policy, too, no longer required their agency; they had rendered their infamous service, and had no longer a country to betray; but they might turn and betray their employers. Abdalasis, therefore, removed them to a distance from his court, and placed them in situations where they could do no harm, and he warned his commanders from being in any wise influenced by their counsels, or aided by their arms.

He now confided entirely in his Arabian troops, and in the Moorish squadrons from Africa, and with their aid he completed the conquest of Lusitania to the ultimate parts of the Algarbe, or west, even to the shores of the great Ocean sea.* From hence he sent his generals to overrun all those vast and rugged sierras, which rise like ramparts along the ocean borders of the peninsula; and they carried the standard of Islam in triumph even to the mountains of Biscay, collecting all manner of precious spoil.

"It is not enough, O Abdalasis," said Ayub, "that we conquer and rule this country with the sword; if we wish our dominion to be secure, we must cultivate the arts of peace, and study to secure the confidence and promote the welfare of the people we have conquered." Abdalasis relished counsel which accorded so well with his own beneficent nature. He endeavored, therefore, to allay the ferment and confusion of the conquest; forbade, under rigorous punishment, all wanton spoil or oppression, and protected the native inhabitants in the enjoyment and cultivation of their lands, and the pursuit of all useful occupations. By the advice of Ayub,

*Algarbe, or Algarbia, in Arabic signifies the west, as Axrkia is the east, Algufia the north, and Aquibla the south. This will serve to explain some of the geographical names on the peninsula, which are of Arabian origin.

also, he encouraged great numbers of industrious Moors and Arabs to emigrate from Africa, and gave them houses and lands; thus introducing a peaceful Mohammedan population into the conquered provinces.

The good effect of the counsels of Ayub were soon apparent. Instead of a sudden but transient influx of wealth, made by the ruin of the land, which left the country desolate, a regular and permanent revenue sprang up, produced by reviving prosperity, and gathered without violence. Abdalasis ordered it to be faithfully collected, and deposited in coffers by public officers appointed in each province for the purpose; and the whole was sent by ten deputies to Damascus to be laid at the feet of the caliph; not as the spoils of a vanquished country, but as the peaceful trophies of a wisely administered government.

The common herd of warlike adventurers, the mere men of the sword, who had thronged to Spain for the purpose of ravage and rapine, were disappointed at being thus checked in their career, and at seeing the reign of terror and violence drawing to a close. What manner of leader is this, said they, who forbids us to make spoil of the enemies of Islam, and to enjoy the land we have wrested from the unbelievers? The partisans of Julian, also, whispered their calumnies. "Behold," said they, "with what kindness he treats the enemies of your faith; all the Christians who have borne arms against you, and withstood your entrance into the land, are favored and protected; but it is enough for a Christian to have befriended the cause of the Moslems to be singled out by Abdalasis for persecution, and to be driven with scorn from his presence."

These insinuations fermented the discontent of the turbulent and rapacious among the Moslems, but all the friends of peace and order and good government applauded the moderation of the youthful emir.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOVES OF ABDALASIS AND EXILONA.

ABDALASIS had fixed his seat of government at Seville, as permitting easy and frequent communications with

the coast of Africa. His palace was of noble architecture, with delightful gardens extending to the banks of the Guadalquivir. In a part of this palace resided many of the most beautiful Christian females, who were detained as captives, or rather hostages, to insure the tranquillity of the country. Those who were of noble rank were entertained in luxury and magnificence; slaves were appointed to attend upon them, and they were arrayed in the richest apparel and decorated with the most precious jewels. Those of tender age were taught all graceful accomplishments; and even where tasks were imposed, they were of the most elegant and agreeable kind. They embroidered, they sang, they danced, and passed their times in pleasing revelry. Many were lulled by this easy and voluptuous existence; the scenes of horror through which they had passed were gradually effaced from their minds, and a desire was often awakened of rendering themselves pleasing in the eyes of their conquerors.

After his return from his campaign in Lusitania, and during the intervals of public duty, Abdalasis solaced himself in the repose of this palace, and in the society of these Christian captives. He remarked one among them who ever sat apart, and neither joined in the labors nor sports of her companions. She was lofty in her demeanor, and the others always paid her reverence; yet sorrow had given a softness to her charms, and rendered her beauty touching to the heart. Abdalasis found her one day in the garden with her companions; they had adorned their heads with flowers, and were singing the songs of their country, but she sat by herself and wept. The youthful emir was moved by her tears, and accosted her in gentle accents. "O fairest of women!" said he, "why dost thou weep, and why is thy heart troubled?" "Alas!" replied she, "have I not cause to weep, seeing how sad is my condition, and how great the height from which I have fallen? In me you behold the wretched Exilona, but lately the wife of Roderick, and the queen of Spain, now a captive and a slave!" and, having said these words, cast her eyes upon the earth, and her tears began to flow afresh.

The generous feelings of Abdalasis were aroused at the sight of beauty and royalty in tears. He gave orders

that Exilona should be entertained in a style befitting her former rank; he appointed a train of female attendants to wait upon her, and a guard of honor to protect her from all intrusion. All the time that he could spare from public concerns was passed in her society; and he even neglected his divan, and suffered his counselors to attend in vain, while he lingered in the apartments and gardens of the palace, listening to the voice of Exilona.

The discreet Ayub saw the danger into which he was falling. "O Abdalasis," said he, "remember the words of thy father. 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of the seductions of love. It renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes!'" A blush kindled on the cheek of Abdalasis, and he was silent for a moment. "Why," said he, at length, "do you seek to charge me with such weakness? It is one thing to be infatuated by the charms of a woman, and another to be touched by her misfortunes. It is the duty of my station to console a princess who has been reduced to the lowest humiliation by the triumphs of our arms. In doing so I do but listen to the dictates of true magnanimity."

Ayub was silent, but his brow was clouded, and for once Abdalasis parted in discontent from his counselor. In proportion as he was dissatisfied with others or with himself, he sought the society of Exilona, for there was a charm in her conversation that banished every care. He daily became more and more enamored, and Exilona gradually ceased to weep, and began to listen with secret pleasure to the words of her Arab lover. When, however, he sought to urge his passion, she recollected the light estimation in which her sex was held by the followers of Mohammed, and assumed a countenance grave and severe.

"Fortune," said she, "has cast me at thy feet; behold, I am thy captive and thy spoil. But though my person is in thy power, my soul is unsubdued; and know that, should I lack force to defend my honor, I have resolution to wash out all stain upon it with my blood. I trust, however, in thy courtesy as a cavalier to respect me in my reverses, remembering what I have been, and that, though the crown has been wrested from my brow, the royal blood still warms within my veins."*

* Faxardo, corona, Gothica, T. 1, p. 492. Joan. Mar. de reb. Hisp. L. 6, c. 27.

The lofty spirit of Exilona, and her proud repulse, served but to increase the passion of Abdalasis. He besought her to unite her destiny with his and share his state and power, promising that she should have no rival nor co-partner in his heart. Whatever scruples the captive queen might originally have felt to a union with one of the conquerors of her lord, and an enemy of her adopted faith, they were easily vanquished, and she became the bride of Abdalasis. He would fain have persuaded her to return to the faith of her fathers; but though of Moorish origin, and brought up in the doctrines of Islam, she was too thorough a convert to Christianity to consent, and looked back with disgust upon a religion that admitted a plurality of wives.

When the sage Ayub heard of the resolution of Abdalasis to espouse Exilona he was in despair. "Alas, my cousin!" said he, "what infatuation possesses thee? Hast thou then entirely forgotten the letter of thy father? 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of love; it is an idle passion, which enfeebles the heart and blinds the judgment.'" But Abdalasis interrupted him with impatience. "My father," said he, "spake but of the blandishments of wanton love; against these I am secured by my virtuous passion for Exilona."

Ayub would fain have impressed upon him the dangers he ran of awakening suspicion in the caliph and discontent among the Moslems, by wedding the queen of the conquered Roderick, and one who was an enemy to the religion of Mohammed; but the youthful lover only listened to his passion. Their nuptials were celebrated at Seville with great pomp and rejoicings, and he gave his bride the name of Omalisam; that is to say, she of the precious jewels:* but she continued to be known among the Christians by the name of Exilona.

CHAPTER XVII.

FATE OF ABDALASIS AND EXILONA—DEATH OF MUZA.

POSSESSION, instead of cooling the passion of Abdalasis, only added to its force; he became blindly enamored

* Conde, p. 1, c. 17.

of his beautiful bride, and consulted her will in all things; nay, having lost all relish for the advice of the discreet Ayub, he was even guided by the counsels of his wife in the affairs of government. Exilona, unfortunately, had once been a queen, and she could not remember her regal glories without regret. She saw that Abdalasis had great power in the land—greater even than had been possessed by the Gothic kings; but she considered it as wanting in true splendor until his brows should be encircled with the outward badge of royalty. One day, when they were alone in the palace of Seville, and the heart of Abdalasis was given up to tenderness, she addressed him in fond yet timid accents. “Will not my lord be offended,” said she, “if I make an unwelcome request?” Abdalasis regarded her with a smile. “What canst thou ask of me, Exilona,” said he, “that wit would not be a happiness for me to grant?” Then Exilona produced a crown of gold, sparkling with jewels, which had belonged to the king, Don Roderick, and said, “Behold, thou art king in authority, be so in thy outward state. There is majesty and glory in a crown; it gives a sanctity to power.” Then putting the crown upon his head, she held a mirror before him that he might behold the majesty of his appearance. Abdalasis chid her fondly, and put the crown away from him, but Exilona persisted in her prayer. “Never,” said she, “has there been a king in Spain that did not wear a crown.” So Abdalasis suffered himself to be beguiled by the blandishments of his wife, and to be invested with the crown and scepter and other signs of royalty.*

It is affirmed by ancient and discreet chroniclers that Abdalasis only assumed this royal state in the privacy of his palace, and to gratify the eye of his youthful bride; but where was a secret ever confined within the walls of a palace? The assumption of the insignia of the ancient Gothic kings was soon rumored about, and caused the most violent suspicions. The Moslems had already felt jealous of the ascendancy of this beautiful woman, and it was now confidently asserted that Abdalasis, won by her persuasions, had secretly turned Christian.

* Cron. gen. de Alonzo el Sabio, p. 3. Joan. Mar. de reb. Hisp. lib. 6, c. 27. Conde, p. 1, c. 19.

The enemies of Abdalasis, those whose rapacious spirits had been kept in check by the beneficence of his rule, seized upon this occasion to ruin him. They sent letters to Damascus accusing him of apostasy, and of an intention to seize upon the throne in right of his wife, Exilona, as widow of the late King Roderick. It was added that the Christians were prepared to flock to his standard as the only means of regaining ascendancy in their country.

These accusations arrived at Damascus just after the accession of the sanguinary Suleiman to the throne, and in the height of his persecution of the unfortunate Muza. The caliph waited for no proofs in confirmation; he immediately sent private orders that Abdalasis should be put to death, and that the same fate should be dealt to his two brothers who governed in Africa, as a sure means of crushing the conspiracy of this ambitious family.

The mandate for the death of Abdalasis was sent to Abhilbar ben Obeidah and Zeyd ben Nabegat, both of whom had been cherished friends of Muza, and had lived in intimate favor and companionship with his son. When they read the fatal parchment, the scroll fell from their trembling hands. "Can such hostility exist against the family of Muza?" exclaimed they. "Is this the reward for such great and glorious services?" The cavaliers remained for some time plunged in horror and consternation. The order, however, was absolute, and left them no discretion. "Allah is great," said they, "and commands us to obey our sovereign." So they prepared to execute the bloody mandate with the blind fidelity of Moslems.

It was necessary to proceed with caution. The open and magnanimous character of Abdalasis had won the hearts of a great part of the soldiery, and his magnificence pleased the cavaliers who formed his guard; it was feared, therefore, that a sanguinary opposition would be made to any attempt upon his person. The rabble, however, had been embittered against him from his having restrained their depredations, and because they thought him an apostate in his heart, secretly bent upon betraying them to the Christians. While, therefore, the two officers made vigilant dispositions to check any movement on the part of the soldiery, they let loose the blind

fury of the populace by publishing the fatal mandate. In a moment the city was in a ferment, and there was a ferocious emulation who should be first to execute the orders of the caliph.

Abdalasis was at this time at a palace in the country not far from Seville, commanding a delightful view of the fertile plain of the Guadalquivir. Hither he was accustomed to retire from the tumult of the court, and to pass his time among groves and fountains and the sweet repose of gardens, in the society of Exilona. It was the dawn of day, the hour of early prayer, when the furious populace arrived at this retreat. Abdalasis was offering up his orisons in a small mosque which he had erected for the use of the neighboring peasantry. Exilona was in a chapel in the interior of the palace, where her confessor, a holy friar, was performing mass. They were both surprised at their devotions, and dragged forth by the hands of the rabble. A few guards, who attended at the palace, would have made defense, but they were overawed by the sight of the written mandate of the caliph.

The captives were borne in triumph to Seville. All the beneficent virtues of Abdalasis were forgotten; nor had the charms of Exilona any effect in softening the hearts of the populace. The brutal eagerness to shed blood, which seems inherent in human nature, was awakened, and woe to the victims when that eagerness is quickened by religious hate. The illustrious couple, adorned with all the grace of youth and beauty, were hurried to a scaffold in the great square of Seville, and there beheaded amid the shouts and execrations of an infatuated multitude. Their bodies were left exposed upon the ground, and would have been devoured by dogs, had they not been gathered at night by some friendly hand, and poorly interred in one of the courts of their late dwelling.

Thus terminated the loves and lives of Abdalasis and Exilona, in the year of the incarnation seven hundred and fourteen. Their names were held sacred as martyrs to the Christian faith; but many read in their untimely fate a lesson against ambition and vainglory; having sacrificed real power and substantial rule to the glittering bauble of a crown.

The head of Abdalasis was embalmed and inclosed in a casket, and sent to Syria to the cruel Suleiman. The messenger who bore it overtook the caliph as he was performing a pilgrimage to Mecca. Muza was among the courtiers in his train, having been released from prison. On opening the casket and regarding its contents, the eyes of the tyrant sparkled with malignant satisfaction. Calling the unhappy father to his side: "Muza," said he, "dost thou know this head?" The veteran recognized the features of his beloved son, and turned his face away with anguish. "Yes! well do I know it," replied he; "and may the curse of God light upon him who has destroyed a better man than himself!"

Without adding another word, he retired to Mount Deran, a prey to devouring melancholy. He shortly after received tidings of the death of his two sons whom he had left in the government of Western Africa, and who had fallen victims to the jealous suspicions of the caliph. His advanced age was not proof against these repeated blows and this utter ruin of his late prosperous family, and he sank into his grave sorrowing and broken-hearted.

Such was the lamentable end of the conqueror of Spain, whose great achievements were not sufficient to atone, in the eye of his sovereign, for a weakness to which all men ambitious of renown are subject, and whose triumphs eventually brought persecution upon himself, and untimely death upon his children.

Here ends the legend of the Subjugation of Spain.

LEGEND OF COUNT JULIAN AND HIS FAMILY.

IN the preceding legends is darkly shadowed out a true story of the woes of Spain. It is a story full of wholesome admonition, rebuking the insolence of human pride and the vanity of human ambition, and showing the futility of all greatness that is not strongly based on virtue. We have seen, in brief space of time, most of the actors in this historic drama disappearing, one by one, from the scene, and going down, conqueror and conquered, to gloomy and unhonored graves. It remains to close this eventful history by holding up, as a signal warning, the fate of the traitor whose perfidious scheme of vengeance brought ruin on his native land.

Many and various are the accounts given in ancient chronicles of the fortunes of Count Julian and his family, and many are the traditions on the subject still extant among the populace of Spain, and perpetuated in those countless ballads sung by peasants and muleteers, which spread a singular charm over the whole of this romantic land.

He who has traveled in Spain in the true way in which the country ought to be traveled—sojourning in its remote provinces; rambling among the rugged defiles and secluded valleys of its mountains; and making himself familiar with the people in their out-of-the-way hamlets, and rarely visited neighborhoods—will remember many a group of travelers and muleteers, gathered of an evening around the door or the spacious hearth of a mountain venta, wrapped in their brown cloaks, and listening with grave and profound attention to the long historic ballad of some rustic troubador, either recited with the true *ore rotundo* and modulated cadences of Spanish elocution, or chanted to the tinkling of a guitar. In this way

he may have heard the doleful end of Count Julian and his family recounted in traditionary rhymes, that have been handed down from generation to generation. The particulars, however, of the following wild legend are chiefly gathered from the writings of the pseudo Moor, Rasis; how far they may be safely taken as historic facts it is impossible now to ascertain; we must content ourselves, therefore, with their answering to the exactions of poetic justice.

As yet everything had prospered with Count Julian. He had gratified his vengeance; he had been successful in his treason, and had acquired countless riches from the ruin of his country. But it is not outward success that constitutes prosperity. The tree flourishes with fruit and foliage while blasted and withering at the heart. Wherever he went, Count Julian read hatred in every eye. The Christians cursed him as the cause of all their woe; the Moslems despised and distrusted him as a traitor. Men whispered together as he approached, and then turned away in scorn; and mothers snatched away their children with horror if he offered to caress them. He withered under the execration of his fellow-men, and last, and worst of all, he began to loathe himself. He tried in vain to persuade himself that he had but taken a justifiable vengeance; he felt that no personal wrong can justify the crime of treason to one's country.

For a time he sought in luxurious indulgence to soothe or forget the miseries of the mind. He assembled round him every pleasure and gratification that boundless wealth could purchase, but all in vain. He had no relish for the dainties of his board; music had no charm wherewith to lull his soul, and remorse drove slumber from his pillow. He sent to Ceuta for his wife Frandina, his daughter Florinda, and his youthful son Alarbot, hoping in the bosom of his family to find that sympathy and kindness which he could no longer meet with in the world. Their presence, however, brought him no alleviation. Florinda, the daughter of his heart, for whose sake he had undertaken this signal vengeance, was sinking a victim to its effects. Wherever she went she found herself a byword of shame and reproach. The outrage she had suffered was imputed to her as wantonness, and her

calamity was magnified into a crime. The Christians never mentioned her name without a curse, and the Moslems, the gainers by her misfortune, spoke of her only by the appellation of Cava, the vilest epithet they could apply to woman.

But the opprobrium of the world was nothing to the upbraiding of her own heart. She charged herself with all the miseries of these disastrous wars; the deaths of so many gallant cavaliers; the conquest and perdition of her country. The anguish of her mind preyed upon the beauty of her person. Her eye, once soft and tender in its expression, became wild and haggard; her cheek lost its bloom, and became hollow and pallid, and at times there was desperation in her words. When her father sought to embrace her she withdrew with shuddering from his arms, for she thought of his treason and the ruin it had brought upon Spain. Her wretchedness increased after her return to her native country, until it rose to a degree of frenzy. One day when she was walking with her parents in the garden of their palace, she entered a tower, and having barred the door ascended to the battlements. From thence she called to them in piercing accents expressive of her insupportable anguish and desperate determination. "Let this city," said she, "be henceforth called Malacca, in memorial of the most wretched of women, who therein put an end to her days." So saying, she threw herself headlong from the tower and was dashed to pieces. The city, adds the ancient chronicler, received the name thus given it, though afterward softened to Malaga, which it still retains in memory of the tragical end of Florinda.

The Countess Frandina abandoned this scene of woe, and returned to Ceuta, accompanied by her infant son. She took with her the remains of her unfortunate daughter, and gave them honorable sepulture in a mausoleum of the chapel belonging to the citadel. Count Julian departed for Carthagená, where he remained plunged in horror at this doleful event.

About this time the cruel Suleiman, having destroyed the family of Muza, had sent an Arab general, named Alahor, to succeed Abdalasis as emir or governor of Spain. The new emir was of a cruel and suspicious nature, and commenced his sway with a stern severity

that soon made those under his command look back with regret to the easy rule of Abdalasis. He regarded with an eye of distrust the renegado Christians who had aided in the conquest, and who bore arms in the service of the Moslems; but his deepest suspicions fell upon Count Julian. "He has been a traitor to his own countrymen," said he; "how can we be sure that he will not prove traitor to us?"

A sudden insurrection of the Christians who had taken refuge in the Asturian mountains quickened his suspicions, and inspired him with fears of some dangerous conspiracy against his power. In the height of his anxiety, he bethought him of an Arabian sage named Yuza, who had accompanied him from Africa. This son of science was withered in form, and looked as if he had outlived the usual term of mortal life. In the course of his studies and travels in the East, he had collected the knowledge and experience of ages; being skilled in astrology, and, it is said, in necromancy, and possessing the marvelous gift of prophecy or divination. To this expounder of mysteries Alaher applied to learn whether any secret treason menaced his safety.

The astrologer listened with deep attention and overwhelming brow, to all the surmises and suspicions of the emir, then shut himself up to consult his books and commune with those supernatural intelligences subservient to his wisdom. At an appointed hour the emir sought him in his cell. It was filled with the smoke of perfumes; squares and circles and various diagrams were described upon the floor, and the astrologer was poring over a scroll of parchment, covered with cabalistic characters. He received Alaher with a gloomy and sinister aspect, pretending to have discovered fearful portents in the heavens, and to have had strange dreams and mystic visions.

"O emir," said he, "be on your guard! treason is around you and in your path; your life is in peril. Beware of Count Julian and his family."

"Enough," said the emir. "They shall all die! Parents and children—all shall die!"

He forthwith sent a summons to Count Julian to attend him in Cordova. The messenger found him plunged in affliction for the recent death of his daughter.

The count excused himself, on account of this misfortune, from obeying the commands of the emir in person, but sent several of his adherents. His hesitation, and the circumstance of his having sent his family across the straits to Africa, were construed by the jealous mind of the emir into proofs of guilt. He no longer doubted his being concerned in the recent insurrections, and that he had sent his family away, preparatory to an attempt, by force of arms, to subvert the Moslem domination. In his fury he put to death Siseburto and Evan, the nephews of Bishop Oppas and sons of the former king, Witiza, suspecting them of taking part in the treason. Thus did they expiate their treachery to their country in the fatal battle of the Guadalete.

Alahor next hastened to Carthagena to seize upon Count Julian. So rapid were his movements that the count had barely time to escape with fifteen cavaliers, with whom he took refuge in the strong castle of Marcuello, among the mountains of Arragon. The emir, enraged to be disappointed of his prey, embarked at Carthagena and crossed the straits to Ceuta, to make captives of the Countess Frandina and her son.

The old chronicle from which we take this part of our legend presents a gloomy picture of the countess in the stern fortress to which she had fled for refuge—a picture heightened by supernatural horrors. These latter the sagacious reader will admit or reject according to the measure of his faith and judgment; always remembering that in dark and eventful times, like those in question, involving the destinies of nations, the downfall of kingdoms, and the crimes of rulers and mighty men, the hand of fate is sometimes strangely visible, and confounds the wisdom of the worldly wise, by intimations and portents above the ordinary course of things. With this proviso, we make no scruple to follow the venerable chronicler in his narration.

Now, so it happened that the Countess Frandina was seated late at night in her chamber in the citadel of Ceuta, which stands on a lofty rock, overlooking the sea. She was revolving in gloomy thought the late disasters of her family, when she heard a mournful noise like that of the sea-breeze moaning about the castle walls. Raising her eyes, she beheld her brother, the Bishop Oppas,

at the entrance of the chamber. She advanced to embrace him, but he forbade her with a motion of his hand, and she observed that he was ghastly pale, and that his eyes glared as with lambent flames.

“Touch me not, sister,” said he, with a mournful voice, “lest thou be consumed by the fire which rages within me. Guard well thy son, for bloodhounds are upon his track. His innocence might have secured him the protection of Heaven, but our crimes have involved him in our common ruin.” He ceased to speak and was no longer to be seen. His coming and going were alike without noise, and the door of the chamber remained fast bolted.

On the following morning a messenger arrived with tidings that the Bishop Oppas had been made prisoner in battle by the insurgent Christians of the Asturias, and had died in fetters in a tower of the mountains. The same messenger brought word that the Emir Alahor had put to death several of the friends of Count Julian; had obliged him to fly for his life to a castle in Arragon, and was embarking with a formidable force for Ceuta.

The Countess Frandina, as has already been shown, was of courageous heart, and danger made her desperate. There were fifty Moorish soldiers in the garrison; she feared that they would prove treacherous, and take part with their countrymen. Summoning her officers, therefore, she informed them of their danger, and commanded them to put those Moors to death. The guards sallied forth to obey her orders. Thirty-five of the Moors were in the great square, unsuspecting of any danger, when they were severally singled out by their executioners, and, at a concerted signal, killed on the spot. The remaining fifteen took refuge in a tower. They saw the armada of the emir at a distance, and hoped to be able to hold out until its arrival. The soldiers of the countess saw it also, and made extraordinary efforts to destroy these internal enemies before they should be attacked from without. They made repeated attempts to storm the tower, but were as often repulsed with severe loss. They then undermined it, supporting its foundations by stanchions of wood. To these they set fire and withdrew to a distance, keeping up a constant shower of missiles to prevent the Moors from sallying forth to extinguish

the flames. The stanchions were rapidly consumed, and when they gave way the tower fell to the ground. Some of the Moors were crushed among the ruins; others were flung to a distance and dashed among the rocks; those who survived were instantly put to the sword.

The fleet of the emir arrived at Ceuta about the hour of vespers. He landed, but found the gates closed against him. The countess herself spoke to him from a tower, and set him at defiance. The emir immediately laid siege to the city. He consulted the astrologer Yuza, who told him that for seven days his star would have the ascendant over that of the youth Alarbot, but after that time the youth would be safe from his power, and would effect his ruin.

Alahor immediately ordered the city to be assailed on every side, and at length carried it by storm. The countess took refuge with her forces in the citadel, and made desperate defense; but the walls were sapped and mined, and she saw that all resistance would soon be unavailing. Her only thoughts now were to conceal her child. "Surely," said she, "they will not think of seeking him among the dead." She led him therefore into the dark and dismal chapel. "Thou art not afraid to be alone in this darkness, my child?" said she.

"No, mother," replied the boy; "darkness gives silence and sleep." She conducted him to the tomb of Florinda. "Fearest thou the dead, my child?" "No, mother; the dead can do no harm, and what should I fear from my sister?"

The countess opened the sepulcher. "Listen, my son," said she. "There are fierce and cruel people who have come hither to murder thee. Stay here in company with thy sister, and be quiet, as thou dost value thy life!" The boy, who was of a courageous nature, did as he was bidden, and remained there all that day, and all the night, and the next day until the third hour.

In the meantime the walls of the citadel were sapped, the troops of the emir poured in at the breach, and a great part of the garrison was put to the sword. The countess was taken prisoner and brought before the emir. She appeared in his presence with a haughty demeanor, as if she had been a queen receiving homage; but when he demanded her son she faltered and turned pale, and replied, "My son is with the dead."

"Countess," said the emir, "I am not to be deceived; tell me where you have concealed the boy, or tortures shall wring from you the secret."

"Emir," replied the countess, "may the greatest torments be my portion, both here and hereafter, if what I speak be not the truth. My darling child lies buried with the dead."

The emir was confounded by the solemnity of her words; but the withered astrologer Yuza, who stood by his side regarding the countess from beneath his bushed eyebrows, perceived trouble in her countenance and equivocation in her words. "Leave this matter to me," whispered he to Alahor. "I will produce the child."

He ordered strict search to be made by the soldiery, and he obliged the countess to be always present. When they came to the chapel her cheek turned pale and her lip quivered. "This," said the subtle astrologer, "is the place of concealment!"

The search throughout the chapel, however, was equally vain, and the soldiers were about to depart, when Yuza remarked a slight gleam of joy in the eye of the countess. "We are leaving our prey behind," thought he; "the countess is exulting."

He now called to mind the words of her asseveration, that her child was with the dead. Turning suddenly to the soldiers he ordered them to search the sepulchers. "If you find him not," said he, "drag forth the bones of that wanton Cava, that they may be burned and the ashes scattered to the winds."

The soldiers searched among the tombs and found that of Florinda partly open. Within lay the boy in the sound sleep of childhood, and one of the soldiers took him gently in his arms to bear him to the emir.

When the countess beheld that her child was discovered, she rushed into the presence of Alahor and, forgetting all her pride, threw herself upon her knees before him.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried she in piercing accents, "mercy on my son—my only child! O emir! listen to a mother's prayer, and my lips shall kiss thy feet. As thou art merciful to him, so may the most high God have mercy upon thee, and heap blessings on thy head."

"Bear that frantic woman hence," said the emir, "but guard her well."

The countess was dragged away by the soldiery without regard to her struggles and her cries, and confined in a dungeon of the citadel.

The child was now brought to the emir. He had been awakened by the tumult, but gazed fearlessly on the stern countenances of the soldiers. Had the heart of the emir been capable of pity, it would have been touched by the tender youth and innocent beauty of the child; but his heart was as the nether millstone, and he was bent upon the destruction of the whole family of Julian. Calling to him the astrologer, he gave the child into his charge with a secret command. The withered son of the desert took the boy by the hand and led him up the winding staircase of a tower. When they reached the summit Yuza placed him on the battlements.

"Cling not to me, my child," said he; "there is no danger."

"Father, I fear not," said the undaunted boy; "yet it is a wondrous height!"

The child looked around with delighted eyes. The breeze blew his curling locks from about his face, and his cheek glowed at the boundless prospect; for the tower was reared upon that lofty promontory on which Hercules founded one of his pillars. The surges of the sea were heard far below, beating upon the rocks, the sea-gulls screamed and wheeled about the foundations of the tower, and the sails of lofty caraccas were as mere specks on the bosom of the deep.

"Dost thou know yonder land beyond the blue water?" said Yuza.

"It is Spain," replied the boy; "it is the land of my father and my mother."

"Then stretch forth thy hands and bless it, my child," said the astrologer.

The boy let go his hold of the wall, and, as he stretched forth his hands, the aged son of Ishmael, exerting all the strength of his withered limbs, suddenly pushed him over the battlements. He fell headlong from the top of that tall tower, and not a bone in his tender frame but was crushed upon the rocks beneath.

Alahor came to the foot of the winding stair.

"Is the boy safe?" cried he.

"He is safe," replied Yuza; "come and behold the truth with thine own eyes."

The emir ascended the tower and looked over the battlements, and beheld the body of the child, a shapeless mass, on the rocks far below, and the sea-gulls hovering about; and he gave orders that it should be thrown into the sea, which was done.

On the following morning the countess was led forth from her dungeon into the public square. She knew of the death of her child, and that her own death was at hand, but she neither wept nor supplicated. Her hair was disheveled, her eyes were haggard with watching, and her cheek was as the monumental stone, but there were the remains of commanding beauty in her countenance, and the majesty of her presence awed even the rabble into respect.

A multitude of Christian prisoners were then brought forth; and Alahor cried out: "Behold the wife of Count Julian; behold one of that traitorous family which has brought ruin upon yourselves and upon your country." And he ordered that they should stone her to death. But the Christians drew back with horror from the deed, and said: "In the hand of God is vengeance; let not her blood be upon our heads." Upon this the emir swore with horrid imprecations that whoever of the captives refused should himself be stoned to death. So the cruel order was executed, and the Countess Frandina perished by the hands of her countrymen. Having thus accomplished his barbarous errand, the emir embarked for Spain, and ordered the citadel of Ceuta to be set on fire, and crossed the straits at night by the light of its towering flames.

The death of Count Julian, which took place not long after, closed the tragic story of his family. How he died remains involved in doubt. Some assert that the cruel Alahor pursued him to his retreat among the mountains, and, having taken him prisoner, beheaded him; others that the Moors confined him in a dungeon, and put an end to his life with lingering torments; while others affirm that the tower of the castle of Marcuello, near Huesca, in Arragon, in which he took refuge, fell on him and crushed him to pieces. All agree that his latter end was miserable in the extreme, and his death violent. The curse of Heaven, which had thus pursued him to the grave, was extended to the very place which had given

him shelter; for we are told that the castle is no longer inhabited on account of the strange and horrible noises that are heard in it, and that visions of armed men are seen above it in the air, which are supposed to be the troubled spirits of the apostate Christians who favored the cause of the traitor.

In after times a stone sepulcher was shown, outside of the chapel of the castle, as the tomb of Count Julian; but the traveler and the pilgrim avoided it, or bestowed upon it a malediction; and the name of Julian has remained a byword and a scorn in the land for the warning of all generations. Such ever be the lot of him who betrays his country.

Here end the legends of the Conquest of Spain.

Written in the Alhambra, June 10, 1829.

NOTE TO THE PRECEDING LEGEND.

EL licenciado Ardevines (Lib. 2, c. 8) dize que dichos Duendos caseros, o los del aire, hazen aparacer exercitos y peleas como lo que se cuenta por tradicion (y aun algunos personas lo deponen como testigos de vista) de la torre y castello de Marcuello, lugar al pie de las montañas de Aragon (aora inhabitable, por las grandes y espantables ruidos, que en el se oyen) donde se retraxo el Conde Don Julian, causa de la perdicion de España; sobre el qual castillo, deze se ven en el aire ciertas visiones, como de soldados, que el vulgo dize son los cavalleros y gente que le favorecian.

Vide "el Ente Dislucidado," por Fray Antonio de Fuentalapeña Capuchin. Seccion 3, Subseccion 5, Instancia 8, Num. 644.

As readers unversed in the Spanish language may wish to know the testimony of the worthy and discreet Capuchin friar, Antonio de Fuentalapeña, we subjoin a translation of it:

"The licentiate Ardevines (Book II., chap. 8) says that the said house-fairies (or familiar spirits), or those of the air, cause the apparitions of armies and battles; such as those which are related in tradition (and some persons even depose to the truth of them as eye-wit-

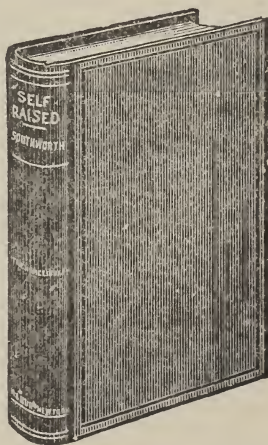
nesses), of the town and castle of Marcuello, a fortress at the foot of the mountains of Arragon (at present uninhabitable, on account of the great and frightful noises heard in it), the place of retreat of Count Don Julian, the cause of the perdition of Spain. It is said that certain apparitions of soldiers are seen in the air, which the vulgar say are those of the courtiers and the people who aided him."

THE END.

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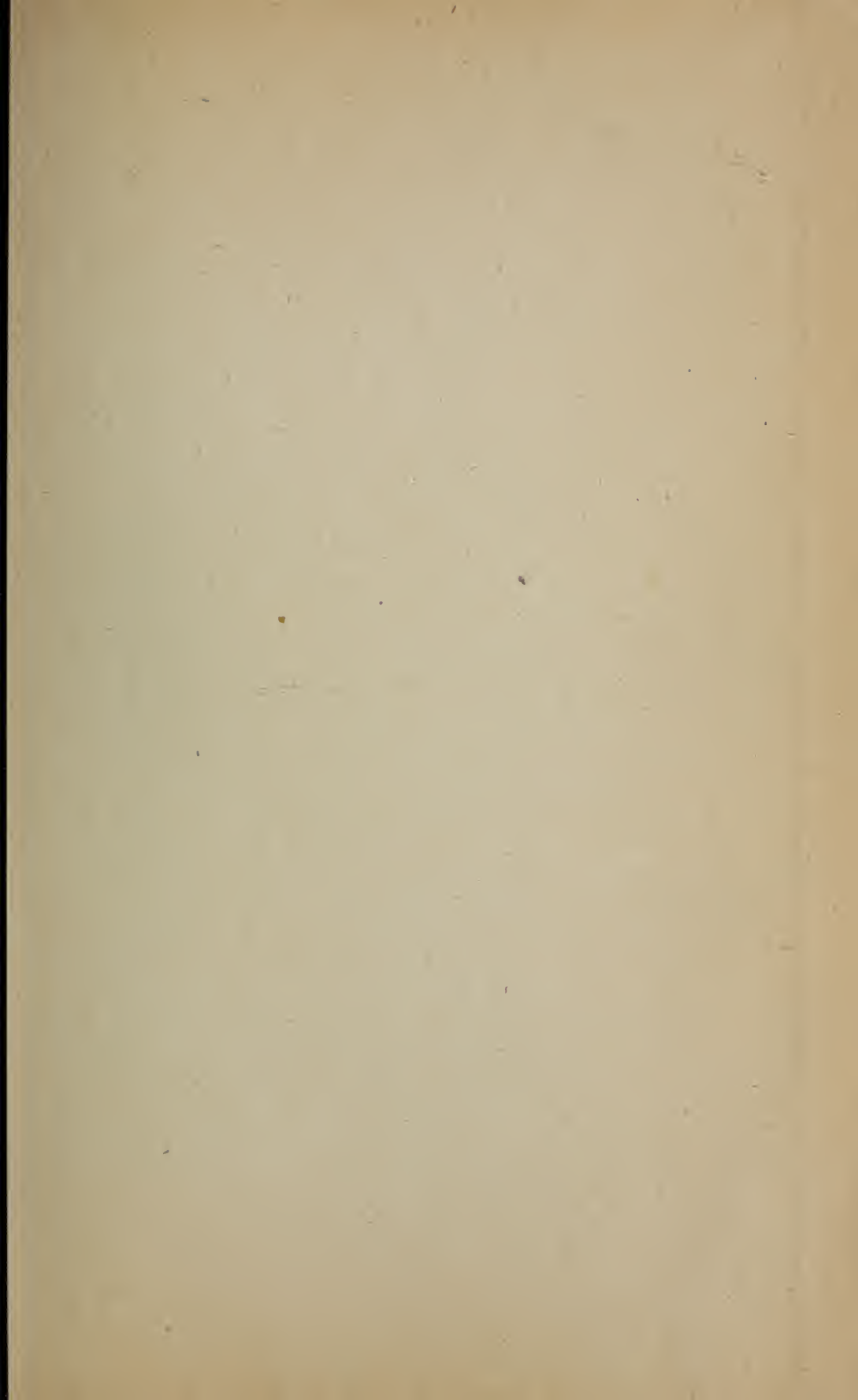
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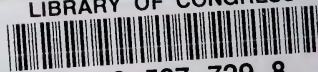
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